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# WOMEN IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD: HOW CAN THE NUMBERS ADVANCE?

Carolyn D. Butler  
*Southeastern University - Lakeland*

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WOMEN IN PASTORAL LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD:  
HOW CAN THE NUMBERS ADVANCE?

by

Carolynne (Cali) Dahliá Butler

Submitted to the School of Honors Committee

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for University Honors Scholars

Southeastern University

2020

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2020

Dedicated to my mom, Rachael. Thank you for your constant love and support as I follow the plan  
God has for my life. You will always be my greatest inspiration.

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## Abstract

The number of women in pastoral leadership within the Assemblies of God grows by the addition of credentialed women. While the numbers seem increasingly exponential, their validity in credentialed growth of women is staggered, lacking true egalitarian equality. It is questioned how many credentialed women are actually in an active, executive role of leadership within the A.G. Data from the A.G. examines the increase in female credentialing and ministry status over a fifteen-year span and its contribution to the total number of female ministers. Biblical theology and historical examples enhance the credibility and authority of female leadership while gender roles and gender studies reveal women's struggle in obtaining such opportunities. Contrary to what has been assumed, women's pastoral leadership among men is still projected towards inequality over the next eighty years. Findings indicate the need for an increase in women's credentialing with the A.G. in order for the total percent of female ministers to rise. Without data of women's specific role in ministry status, it is hard to infer the impact women truly contribute to the Assemblies of God's ministers.

**KEY WORDS:** woman pastor, Assemblies of God, women in ministry, credentialing, ministry status, credential status, gender roles, credentialed women, Pentecostalism

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## **Introduction**

Egalitarianism, the philosophy that all humans are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities, is mentioned more than it is put to practice. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, society has slowly brought egalitarianism to reality, specifically in gender equality. From the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution in 1920 to the Equal Pay Act in 1963, gender equality has had a slow progression. The same can be said for the church, specifically in the Assemblies of God denomination.

Egalitarianism within the church has progressed slowly, quickly, or remained stagnant, depending on the denomination, but it has failed to reach the level of equality that secular society has achieved. Why is it that the church has fallen behind on such a significant concept when the church used to be the driving force for societal reformation? The answer can be found in the church's doctrine, liturgy, and interpretation of Scripture. What has been amended in society has remained complacent in the church. This complacency has resulted in a lack of women's involvement in church leadership, specifically pastoral leadership. The Assemblies of God prides itself as one of the leading denominations who advocates and promotes women in pastoral leadership. The question remains, however, as to how many of these women are actually acquiring pastoral roles within the denomination.

Before women's involvement in pastoral leadership within the Assemblies of God can be further researched, it is important to understand the history surrounding women in the fellowship. The church realm has been introduced to the concept of women in pastoral leadership since the Azusa Street Revival in 1906, a concept that is ironically rejected by older generations. It is from this revival that the Assemblies of God was birthed. Although opportunities for female ministry have increased over the past century, the numbers of women actively involved in such

ministry do not reflect. Are women still subject to gender discrimination at almost a quarter through the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Do gender roles still play a part in individual's perception of women working in leadership positions equal to men? Gender discrimination, especially within the church, must come to an end.

The research questions this paper will attempt to answer are:

1. What does the Bible say about the authority of women in pastoral leadership?
2. How have women in pastoral leadership progressed within the Assemblies of God?
3. How might the number of female ministers increase in the Assemblies of God?
4. Are there differences in perception between men and women within the church, and does this affect their leadership capability and/or influence?

This paper will attempt to answer the above research questions in order to explain the disparity in gender-based opportunity in pastoral leadership positions within the Assemblies of God. This paper will also propose solutions to repair the difficulties surrounding the above questions.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Methodology**

This chapter gives an outline of research methods this paper followed to answer the research questions listed in the introduction. An extended literature review was conducted, followed by an analysis of the research found. The extended literature review began by exploring the biblical theology for why women can be in pastoral ministry. The Bible and commentaries were used to support this evidence. The biblical theology was followed by a brief look at female ministers throughout Pentecostal history, dating back as far as the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Biographical articles and books were used to support this history. From the EBSCO database, gender roles and gender authority were researched to determine the influence of women in the church and their impact on ministry. The history of the Assemblies of God tradition was then explored, pulling from the Assemblies of God official website. Statistical reports and additional information were collected from this site to show the specific data on women in pastoral ministry from the fellowship, both past and present. Charts and graphs were created to better show and explain the data represented. Finally, I answered the proposed research questions from my introduction.

From the research collected, I included an analysis and discussion from my findings. It is here that I discuss the answered questions from my research and what these answers could mean for the future generations of women in pastoral leadership within the Assemblies of God. I also included a proposal for possible solutions for how the total percent of women in ministry can equalize with men, specifically in how they can be educated about certification, licensing, and ordination within the Assemblies of God.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

I will organize this literature review into five major sections: Biblical Theology, Historical Impact of Women in Pentecostalism, Gender Roles & Authority, The Assemblies of God and Women, and Assemblies of God Statements & Data. The first section will provide the Biblical theology for why women can and should step into a pastoral leadership position. I will examine two passages that are commonly used to refute women in a pastoral leadership role while including three passages that support women in pastoral leadership. The second section will provide the historical background for women in pastoral leadership within Pentecostalism, focusing primarily on the Azusa Street Revival and the women and ministries that flowed out of that movement. The third section will identify key gender roles regarding authority in ministry and how those roles impact women's influence in the church. The fourth section will provide the historical background of the Assemblies of God denomination, specifically how the fellowship was developed and continues to function. The fifth section will provide the Assemblies of God's specific statements and positions regarding women in ministry, including official papers and their own data on the topic. I will close the literature review by expressing areas of strength and weakness in my research.

## Biblical Theology

Scripture is the final authority for all concerns that deal with practicing faith, so it is through the Bible that pastoral ministry should be defined and explained for both men and women. I will provide two Scriptures in which female ministry is commonly refuted and three Scriptures for which female ministry is supported, exegeting them both.

For generations, the idea of women in pastoral leadership has been rejected based on the belief that Scripture denies women such opportunity. The two, prominent verses that are used to reject women in pastoral leadership are 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. It is important to interpret these two passages within their historical and literary context; only then can the true meaning of the Scriptures be found.

### *1 Timothy 2:11-12*

1 Timothy 2:11-12 says,

<sup>11</sup>A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent.<sup>1</sup>

In 1 Timothy, Paul was writing to Timothy, a man whom Paul closely mentored and considered a son. Timothy was pastoring in Ephesus at the time, and Paul was quick to inform Timothy of his reason for staying in Ephesus: to warn false teachers not to involve themselves in spreading false teachings, beliefs, and practices (1:3-11).<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 1:5-7 presents the goal of the warning mentioned in verse 3, to first develop a genuine love and then to prevent the

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<sup>1</sup> “1 Timothy 2:9-15 NIV - A Woman Should Learn in Quietness and - Bible Gateway,” accessed October 18, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+2%3A11-12&version=NIV>.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, UNITED STATES: B&H Publishing Group, 1992), 64, accessed October 18, 2020, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=680800>.

Ephesians from playing with teachings that were only full of empty talk.<sup>3</sup> It is from these warnings and goals opening professed by Paul that we can assume Ephesus was dealing with an abundant amount of false teachers who want to profess the law yet have no solid understanding of it. Overall, Paul's commission to Timothy was threefold: to prevent the spread of false teaching (1:3-11), to share a gospel that could save sinners (1:12-17), and to prevent the decline of commitment among church leaders (1:18-20).<sup>4</sup> Chapter 2 begins with the emphases that will help Timothy accomplish the tasks previously mentioned.

In 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Paul speaks to holy living among men and women, addressing them individually. The appeal to women begins in verse 9 which says, "I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God."<sup>5</sup> It is important to note three things from Paul's address to women. First, Paul was speaking of holy living and worship as it related to the church, not the home.<sup>6</sup> Second, many of the Ephesian women were exceedingly wealthy, politically powerful, and educated.<sup>7</sup> While not all of the women in the church of Ephesus represented this wealth, much of Paul's statement to these women spoke of such adornments. Third, the church life of Ephesus was much different than that of the 20<sup>th</sup> or even 21<sup>st</sup> century church. In the church of Ephesus, speakers varied and arose at

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>5</sup> "1 Timothy 2:9-15 NIV - A Woman Should Learn in Quietness and - Bible Gateway."

<sup>6</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 90.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 91.

different times to teach, exhort, and prophesy to the congregation.<sup>8</sup> This is why Paul commands women to learn in verse 11. Jewish women were not encouraged to study the Torah; instead, they encouraged their sons and husbands to study, learning from their husbands.<sup>9</sup> Because a woman had not studied the Scriptures herself, she was unqualified to teach.<sup>10</sup> Church in that culture was often full of members spontaneously speaking, so women may have interrupted speakers to interject their own teachings (remember Paul's warning at the beginning of the letter), disrupting the flow of the service.<sup>11</sup> Instead, Paul is urging the women to listen and learn from the services. Paul's command to learn would have drastically differed from the common custom of Judaism. Judaism often enforced the literal silence of women, neglecting concern for women's spiritual growth or knowledge.<sup>12</sup> The contrast to Judaism's practice shows Paul's appreciation of women and their right to learn, following the leading of Jesus and his teaching of women (Luke 10:38-42).

Paul specifies two features about a woman's attitude in learning: learning in "quietness" and in "full submission."<sup>13</sup> The word "quietness" in the Greek is *hēsychia*, meaning "stillness" or "desistance from bustle."<sup>14</sup> Learning in quietness, therefore, means having a teachable spirit not

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>9</sup> Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 71.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 92.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "G2271 - Hēsychia - Strong's Greek Lexicon (NIV)," *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed October 18, 2020, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/niv/gen/1/1/s\\_1001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/niv/gen/1/1/s_1001).

physical silence. The term “full submission” was a warning against “abusing the leadership of the congregation by disrespectful, boisterous actions.”<sup>15</sup> As previously mentioned, Paul’s ultimate warning to Timothy was allowing false teachers to teach and spread their beliefs. Paul’s urge to women to be still and learn rather than speak or interrupt service with their false beliefs shows his concern for women to educate themselves in the Word before they are to address it to the congregation. Paul was only prohibiting women to speak if they were falsely teaching. The phrase “I do not permit” (*ouk epirepō*) is a present active indicative,<sup>16</sup> meaning that it is not an imperative verb.

Ephesus was the center of worship to the goddess Artemis at the Temple of Artemis where women often played a dominant role in worship life, exercising authority over men.<sup>17</sup> The phrase “to have authority over a man” translates to *authentēō* in the Greek, meaning “to govern” or “to exercise dominion over.”<sup>18</sup> If this same type of behavior was found in the Christian church, it would have needed to be addressed immediately, particularly if, as it seems likely,

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<sup>15</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 92.

<sup>16</sup> “1 Timothy 2: New International Version (NIV),” *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed October 18, 2020, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/niv/1ti/2/9/s\\_1121009](https://www.blueletterbible.org/niv/1ti/2/9/s_1121009).

<sup>17</sup> W. Hulitt Gloer, *Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy-Titus* (Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2010), 144, accessed October 18, 2020, <https://web-b-ebscobhost-com.seu.idm.oclc.org/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzk3Nzk3N19fQU41?sid=6c64d9b1-4af8-4e44-9948-817bb936f57b@pdc-v-sessmgr03&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>.

<sup>18</sup> “G831 - Authentēō - Strong’s Greek Lexicon (NIV),” *Blue Letter Bible*, accessed October 18, 2020, [https://www.blueletterbible.org/niv/gen/1/1/s\\_1001](https://www.blueletterbible.org/niv/gen/1/1/s_1001). For an interesting perspective on the verb *authentēō* being translated as “to proclaim oneself the author of,” see Richard and Catherine Kroeger’s *I Suffer Not a Woman* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992). They argue that Paul is prohibiting a possible false teaching that declared Eve pre-existed Adam. They argue that Paul’s appeal to Genesis 2 is his attempt to counter this argument.



women might have been spreading false teaching. This is why Paul says women have no authority over men because it would have been contrary to their pagan religion.

### *1 Corinthians 14:34-35*

1 Corinthians 14:34-35 is another passage of scripture that is commonly misinterpreted but adds an explanation for why women should be in ministry. My exegesis of this passage will be more condensed.

Paul states,

<sup>34</sup> Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. <sup>35</sup> If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.<sup>19</sup>

1 Corinthians was a letter written by Paul to the church of Corinth. The church of Corinth was founded by Paul during his second missionary journey (Acts 18). He lived with Priscilla and Aquila who he eventually handed the church to after eighteen months. At the beginning of Paul's letter, it is clear that the church of Corinth was still swayed by the ways of the world.<sup>20</sup> Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, a populous and prosperous city, that was intellectually attentive, materially wealthy, and morally corrupt.<sup>21</sup> The

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<sup>19</sup> "Bible Gateway Passage: 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 - New International Version," *Bible Gateway*, accessed October 18, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2014%3A34-35&version=NIV>.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, UNITED STATES: B&H Publishing Group, 2014), accessed October 18, 2020, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=1679062>.

<sup>21</sup> Leon L. Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 7, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, UNITED STATES: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 21, accessed October 18, 2020, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=2030116>.

letter specifically speaks to the church's gatherings for worship, and what that order should look like, in chapters 11 through 14.

Paul has been teaching the church edification, and Paul specifically spells out guidelines for tongues and prophesy in 14:27-33. Regulation is required because tongues must be interpreted and prophesy must be evaluated.<sup>22</sup> It is important to note Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5 which says, "Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head..."<sup>23</sup> Paul testifies that both men and women are able to pray and prophesy in the church. If Paul states that women can prophesy in chapter 11, why would he refute himself in chapter 14? Paul is not refuting himself because Paul is "not discussing whether and how qualified women may minister, but how women should learn (v.35)."<sup>24</sup> The speaking that Paul is referring to is not of a preaching kind – for Paul affirmed women's speaking (Acts 2:18; 21:9) – but of self-willed kind.<sup>25</sup> Women attending church settings with their husbands remained part of the congregation and were to follow the rules that applied to all in the congregation (vs.34).

Common practices during a service would include the spontaneous use of tongues and prophecy, two practices that Paul specifically speaks of in verses 1-25 of chapter 14.<sup>26</sup> If there

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<sup>22</sup> Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 494.

<sup>23</sup> "Bible Gateway Passage: 1 Corinthians 11:4-6 - New International Version," *Bible Gateway*, accessed October 18, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2011%3A4-6&version=NIV>.

<sup>24</sup> Morris, *1 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 7:192.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 7:193.

<sup>26</sup> Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, second (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 131, 253.

was no interpretation of tongues or prophesy, the speaker was called to be silent in the church (vs.28).<sup>27</sup> Just because an individual felt enabled to speak, it did not give them the authority to speak to the congregation,<sup>28</sup> especially if no interpretation was to follow. In order to have their questions answered, these women would disrupt services and ask those who were teaching. It is more likely that women were asking questions of men other than their husbands during church meetings, bringing shame to her husband.<sup>29</sup> This is why Paul says that women should remain silent and should not speak. He wanted the women to ask their husbands these questions at home – service time was not the appropriate place for this. This is why verse 33 says, “For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.” There was an orderly way that service was conducted, and interruptions, with unnecessary questions, was not a part of that order. Paul’s concern, therefore, was not with the women’s speech or their participation in the evaluation of prophecy but with behavior that could be offensive to their husbands.<sup>30</sup>

### *Galatians 3:27-28*

While 1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 remain the most controversial passages of Scripture when it comes to the authority of women in ministry, there is an abundance of

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Tongues, or *glossolalia*, denotes the uttering of a language unknown to the speaker that is seen as a gift from the Holy Spirit, enabling one to praise and worship God. Prophecy interpreting Scripture and preaching sermons as a means of education and edification.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 494.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Scripture that supports such authority. While there is not enough time or space for this particular paper to comb through them all, I will focus primarily on Galatians 3:27-28, Acts 2:16-18, the numerous women in ministry mentioned in Acts and Romans.

Galatians 3:27-28 says,

<sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

As Paul writes to the church in Galatia, he speaks to the unification and equality found when an individual accepts Christ. Jewish men often prayed to God in thanksgiving that they were not created a Gentile or a woman, so this verse does away with such prejudice.<sup>31</sup> If salvation is open to all, not just Jews, then it means all. Under Christ, no one is separated by ethnicity, race, occupation, or gender; the “age-old barriers” have been overcome in Christ, uniting believers as one.<sup>32</sup> If in Christ, why would there still be separation and discrimination, especially among gender? The simple, yet profound statement in Galatians lays the unifying ground of equality for both men and women.

*Acts 2:16-18*

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<sup>31</sup> Alan R. Cole, *The Letter of Paul to the Galatians: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 156.

<sup>32</sup> Ralph P. Martin and Julie L. Wu, “Galatians,” in *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Romans to Philemon*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, n.d.), 284.

Immediately following the outpouring of the Holy spirit in Acts 2, Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, addresses the crowd below the upper room. Full of the Holy Spirit, Peter directly quotes the prophet Joel in his sermon (Joel 2:28-29).

Peter states,

<sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> 'In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.  
<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.'<sup>33</sup>

It is no accident that Peter quotes the prophecy from Joel. Because Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, God was speaking directly through Peter to the people listening (and to us today). God's Spirit is quoted to be poured out on *both* men and women, allowing *both* men and women to prophesy. Prophecy is one of the nine spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Again, there is this language of "all people" mentioned by Peter (vs.17). If the Spirit belongs to *all* people, and if *all* people can prophesy, what limits women in authority? According to the Spirit, women have the same access to the Father and the spiritual gifts the Father provides, empowering women to preach, teach, prophecy, and assume leadership positions.

### *Women Throughout the Old and New Testament*

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<sup>33</sup> "Bible Gateway Passage: Acts 2:16-18 - New International Version," *Bible Gateway*, accessed October 18, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202%3A16-18&version=NIV>.

To further solidify the concept of women in ministry, the book of Acts and Romans provide substantial lists and stories of women in active ministry throughout the New Testament. To expand authority even larger, I have also included women from the Old Testament who held significant leadership positions and authority over men. While I will not include specific details as to their roles, I will provide Scripture references for the reader's benefit.

#### Old Testament Women:

- Miriam was a prophet (Exodus 15:20).
- Deborah was a prophet and judge (Judges 4).
- Huldah was a prophet (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22).
- Athaliah was the only queen of Israel (2 Kings 8:16-11:16; 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:15).

#### New Testament Women:

- Philip's four unmarried daughters were prophets (Acts 21:8,9).
- Phoebe was a deacon (Romans 16:1).
- Priscilla was a teacher and co-worker of Paul (Romans 16:3-5).
- Mary was a hard worker (Romans 16:6).
- Junia was a Jew in prison with Paul, noted as being outstanding among the apostles (Romans 16:7).
- Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis worked hard in the Lord (Romans 16:12).
- Chloe, Euodia, Syntyche, and Nympha were house church leaders (1 Corinthians 1:11; Philippians 4:2,3; Colossians 4:15).

The list does not end here. There is an overwhelming evidence of women actively involved in ministry, both alongside Paul and recognized by Paul to do the work of the Lord.

Overall, women in ministry is not refuted by the Bible. Instead, it is strongly supported throughout Scripture, both Old and New Testament. For those who still question women's authority to ministry, I would then question Jesus' interaction and empowerment of women throughout the Gospels.<sup>34</sup> All of Scripture points to the proper education of women and empowerment to proclaim the Good News if she has been called by God.

### **Historical Impact of Women in Pentecostalism**

Historically, the impact of women in Pentecostal pastoral ministry has varied. Most notable is the creation of multiple denominations from the Pentecostal movement, beginning at its birth. The early 20<sup>th</sup> century represents a turning point for women in ministry as their voices and impact shouted to the ends of the world. The Azusa Street Revival played the most significant role in empowering women to lead in the church. Women such as Florence Crawford and Aimee Semple McPherson came out of this movement and helped shape what the world knows as Pentecostalism today. Women's ministry involvement before the Pentecostal movement was very limited. Women could only serve in four avenues of church leadership: diaconate (nursing or social work), foreign missions, missionary societies, and Christian education.<sup>35</sup>

The Azusa Street Revival is commonly referred to as the movement that began Pentecostalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The revival was led by William Joseph Seymour, a pastor of a black Holiness Church in Houston, Texas who enrolled at a Bible College run by Charles

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<sup>34</sup> John 4:4-30; Mark 5:25-34; John 8:2-11; Luke 10:38-42; Matthew 28:1-10.

<sup>35</sup> Estrela Y. Alexander, *Limited Liberty: The Legacy of Four Pentecostal Women Pioneers* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2008), 1.

Parham.<sup>36</sup> The college was known for speaking in tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit, an aspect of Christianity that was not widely accepted. In 1906, Seymour moved to Los Angeles and became the pastor of the Church of Nazarene where he emphasized the Holy Spirit and the use of glossolalia in his sermons.<sup>37</sup> News of Seymour's services spread as healings and anointings of the Holy Spirit fell on attendees. Seymour's services were unlike any other, consisting of spontaneous prayer, sermons, worship, altar calls, testimonies, and the like.<sup>38</sup> The church grew so large that they had to lease an abandoned Methodist Episcopal church on 312 Azusa Street, the place where a revival of the Holy Spirit broke out on everyone in attendance.

Within the modern era, many women have played a vital role in shaping ministry today. In a time where it was uncommon for a woman to be in ministry or leadership at a major capacity, there were certain women who stepped beyond this line. One woman in particular, Florence Louise Crawford, established the Apostolic Faith Church.

Crawford was born to a family of atheists who held many lectures and discussions in their home regarding a variety of topics, including the Bible.<sup>39</sup> Despite her extensive education and atheist upbringing, she still felt as though there was a God. After her conversion to Christianity, Crawford never felt as though she truly belonged anywhere until the Azusa Street

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<sup>36</sup> "Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements," 53, accessed October 14, 2020, <https://web-b-ebscohost-com.seu.idm.oclc.org/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/bmxlYmtfXzEwNjIwNI9fQU41?sid=ec0f3e40-774f-458a-aae2-483a37065232@sessionmgr101&vid=0&format=EB&rid=1>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>39</sup> Estrela Alexander, *Limited Liberty: The Legacy of Four Pentecostal Women Pioneers* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 200), 30.



Movement.<sup>40</sup> She loved the spiritual atmosphere the movement created, and she wanted to continue this encounter through her own evangelical campaign. Crawford eventually began a newspaper called *The Apostolic Faith* in Portland that she used as an evangelistic tool; this paper was pulled from William Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival, along with the entire mailing list.<sup>41</sup> As the years progressed, Crawford took to heart the evangelistic style of her ministry along with the spiritual atmosphere she had experienced during the Azusa Street Movement.

Overall, Crawford used her experiences and heart for others to bring the Pentecostal Movement to others. She led others and created resources for them to experience the Holy Spirit for themselves and grow in their faith. It is because of her that the Apostolic Faith Church exists today and has heavy influence in Pentecostalism.

Perhaps most influential to the Assemblies of God denomination was Aimee Semple McPherson. She was considered the most widely recognized Pentecostal preacher of the early 20th century and the most controversial.<sup>42</sup> McPherson was by no means boring or plain; most considered her physically attractive and fashionably addressed, joining herself with politicians and movie stars for company.<sup>43</sup> Most importantly, McPherson did not care where she had to preach the Gospel so long as she was able, utilizing makeshift tents, stages, and night clubs to house her services.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander, *Limited Liberty: The Legacy of Four Pentecostal Women Pioneers*, 89.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 90.

McPherson was converted to Christianity at the age of seventeen at a Pentecostal revival meeting. Shortly after her conversion, McPherson felt the call to ministry; however, she aimed to see whether or not the Bible created a basis for the ministry of women.<sup>45</sup> After marrying Robert Semple, the preacher of the revival service that converted her, the two were ordained and began pastoral and evangelistic work in Durham. In 1910, the two become missionaries to Hong Kong where Robert Semple passed.<sup>46</sup>

In 1912, McPherson married Harold McPherson. In 1915, McPherson was met with a serious illness that intensified her call to preach the Gospel. After her recovery, McPherson preached her first solo evangelistic meeting in Rhode Island. Her husband supported her ministry at first but contrasting ideas of homelife soon ended their marriage in divorce. From 1916-1918, McPherson conducted a series of tent revivals, traveling through the country as an evangelist.<sup>47</sup>

After moving to Los Angeles, McPherson strengthen Pentecostal congregation and established new congregations. She even held Assemblies of God credentials from 1919-1922 as an ordained minister. After 1922, she resigned her credentials. While McPherson still remained closely connected with the congregations of the denomination, she was never re-credentialed. McPherson's time with the Assemblies of God was held in high esteem by others. In 1920, she received the honor of preaching the keynote sermon during the 1920 General Council.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 95.

In 1922, McPherson announced her desire to form an “interdenominational team” to further her evangelistic work.<sup>49</sup> It was from this one idea that McPherson founded the Church of the Foursquare Gospel – a denomination still in existence today. She built one of the earliest megachurches in the Pentecostal movement, led evangelistic and healing services, was a prolific writer, operated radio stations and much more.<sup>50</sup>

Aimee Semple McPherson was not afraid to step out into the call that God placed on her life. She defied all social and political boundaries and never settled on her theology. Her leadership and tenacity to preach anywhere allowed McPherson to establish a denomination of Pentecostalism that is still flourishing today. Her example is to be followed for women all over the world who feel the call to pastor and preach.

### **Gender Roles & Authority**

Gender discrimination within the secular and ministerial world is in part due to differentiating gender roles. Gender roles within the Pentecostal church have always been highly controversial, especially when it comes to the governing authority of males and females. Ultimately, cultural expectations and religious beliefs have had the largest influence on Pentecostal women’s religious authority,<sup>51</sup> a problem that has been quite difficult to reverse.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>51</sup> Lisa P. Stephenson, “Prophesying Women and Ruling Men: Women’s Religious Authority in North American Pentecostalism,” *Religions; Basel* 2, no. 3 (2011): 423, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1537382956/abstract/B2DFD51AE8A24735PQ/1>.

While many Pentecostal churches do not see an issue with the ministering authority of women, the ruling authority of women is frequently questioned and frowned upon. Acts 2 provides a solid foundation for the authority of women. As Lisa Stephenson quotes, “Understanding authority as legitimated power, Pentecostal women gain access to a realm of religious authority because of their experience of Spirit baptism.”<sup>52</sup> The empowering Spirit was poured out on both men *and* women; however, not all Pentecostals see Pentecost as an outpouring of authority. Lisa Stephenson continues, “According to some Pentecostals, Spirit baptism does not impute to women the religious authority to hold ruling offices. Pentecostals identify the legitimation of this type of authority with one’s male identity, not with Spirit baptism *per se*.”<sup>53</sup> Scholars, therefore, have identified two types of authority within Pentecostalism: ministering authority and ruling authority.<sup>54</sup> In Max Weber’s *The Sociology of Religion*, he describes these two roles of authority as “prophet” and “priest.”<sup>55</sup>

The early stages of classical Pentecostalism saw equality between men and women after the Azusa Street Revival, and the equality was based upon three factors:

1. The importance of “a calling” as the only difference between ministers and laity,
2. The confirmation of the call through the recognition of charisma by the community,
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<sup>52</sup> Lisa P. Stephenson, “Prophesying Women and Ruling Men: Women’s Religious Authority in North American Pentecostalism,” *Religions; Basel* 2, no. 3 (2011): 411, accessed March 16, 2019, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1537382956/abstract/B2DFD51AE8A24735PQ/1>.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

3. The community's eschatological belief that they were experiencing the "latter rain" (Joel 2:23), in which "your sons *and your daughters will prophesy*" (Joel 2:28).<sup>56</sup>

Early classical Pentecostalism, ranging from 1901 to 1920, can be classified as "Prophetic Pentecostalism."<sup>57</sup> Max Weber saw a differentiation between men and women based upon the prophetic or priestly roles they were given. The "prophet's" claim to authority was given by their personal revelation and charisma; the "priest's" claim to authority was given by their virtue of serviced in a sacred tradition.<sup>58</sup>

Equality of women was allotted because of the community's recognition of charisma, specifically the "anointing of the Holy Spirit."<sup>59</sup> The legitimization of a women's call and authority was through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Azusa Street Mission, as further discussed in the "Historical Impact of Women in Pentecostalism" section of this paper, served as the driving force for such charisma of women. Furthermore, women preaching became a clear sign that classical Pentecostals were in the "last days" prophesied by the prophet Joel in the Old Testament.<sup>60</sup> "Your sons and your daughters will prophesy" became an obvious confirmation for women's ability to preach along with the anointing of the Holy Spirit to do so. As Aimee Semple McPherson quotes, "When God anoints you to preach, here are your credentials and authority,

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<sup>56</sup> Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, "Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches," *Review of Religious Research* 22, no. 1 (1980): 4, accessed October 29, 2020, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3510481>.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 9.

students, whether male or female: ‘Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.’”<sup>61</sup> Early Pentecostalism viewed most pastoral and preaching roles as prophetic while priestly functions were identified as administrative responsibilities or the administration of church ordinances.<sup>62</sup> Women, therefore, could become pastors of churches because of their prophetic call, but they could not perform priestly roles.<sup>63</sup> While these restrictions on women were minimal at first, they significantly increased at the turn of the 1920s because community relationships within Pentecostalism became more routinized and regimented.<sup>64</sup> The three factors of the prophetic phase were no longer significant in the priestly phase. Once a fellowship was organized and systematic, the need for women in any governing authority was no longer recognized or accepted even though women were responsible for the fellowship’s development.

Ultimately, American women’s religious authority is influenced by both cultural expectations and religious beliefs, restricting their access to power.<sup>65</sup> Despite the roles of calling, charisma, and eschatological expectancy in legitimizing women’s ministering authority, it has not been enough to provide them governing authority because governing authority has been the exclusive entitlement of men.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Stephenson, “Prophesying Women and Ruling Men,” 412.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 423.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

For further review of gender roles and leadership studies of women in ministry, see Johns, Loretta, and Janice Watson. 2006. “Leadership Development of Women Preparing for Ministry.” *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 15, no. 2: 111–42 and Rayburn, Carole A., Lee J.

## The Assemblies of God and Women

The Assemblies of God is a Pentecostal denomination founded after the Azusa Street Revival. Because of the revival, a group of Pentecostals acknowledged the need for more organization and accountability within the movement. This paved the way for a multitude of meetings in Hot Springs, Arkansas on April 2, 1914, forming the Assemblies of God denomination. Doctrine was established as well as the creation of a legal standing. Unity was promoted, and missions and ministerial training were established to aid the fellowship. By April 12, 1914, the first General Council of the Assemblies of God was established with an elected chairman (later changed to general superintendent), Eudorus N. Bell, an elected secretary, and executive presbyter, J. Roswell Flower. In addition to the two elected officers, 300 delegates were chosen to represent the variety of independent and networked churches across the nation.

An immediate problem was found as a doctrinal dispute occurred among the members, namely whether to accept the traditional Trinitarian theology or to accept Oneness theology.<sup>67</sup> In 1916, a Statement of Fundamental Truths was approved by the General Council, affirming Trinitarian orthodoxy. This is one of two major defining beliefs of the Assemblies of God.

From its conception, the Assemblies of God valued evangelism and missions as its core identity. Missions programs were created to “establish self-supporting and self-propagating

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Richmond, and Lynn Rogers. 1986. “Men, Women, and Religion: Stress Within Leadership Roles.” *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 42, no. 3: 540–46.

<sup>67</sup> Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, second (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 220, 326.

Trinitarian theology is the belief that God exists as three persons in one Godhead; they share the same essence or substance, having a single divine nature. Oneness theology rejects the Trinity and only recognizes Jesus.

national church bodies.” Today, leaders and ministers are trained in 2,378 foreign Bible schools and extension programs. The Assemblies of God has also endorsed 17 Bible colleges, universities, and seminaries within the United States, including Southeastern University.

In 1915, Eudorus N. Bell ordained woman based upon the Pentecost Proclamation, limited women to roles that would not give them ecclesial authority over men.<sup>68</sup> Women could speak from the floor of the council, but they were not allowed to vote. Women could preach and evangelize, but only men could pastor and hold ecclesial offices of authority.<sup>69</sup> Women were only allowed to pastor churches if they had founded the church themselves.

A resolution was brought to the 1931 General Council involving the limitations placed upon women. The resolution further restricted women’s ability to perform religious functions such as communion, marriage, baptisms, and funerals. Women objected, especially those who pastored their own churches; their authority was being questioned.<sup>70</sup> The General Council of 1933 showed the failure to administer the resolution. Women resented the resolution and refused to be contained. In 1935, the Assemblies of God voted to extend full ordination to women.<sup>71</sup>

Joseph R. Flower, General Secretary of the Assemblies of God from 1975 to 1993, circulated a paper that called for the “abolition of sex discrimination and racial and social

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<sup>68</sup> Zachary M. Tackett, “Callings, Giftings, and Empowerment: Preaching Women and American Pentecostalism in Historical and Theological Perspective,” in *Women in Pentecostal and Charismatic Ministry: Informing a Dialogue on Gender, Church, and Ministry* (Leiden, NETHERLANDS, THE: BRILL, 2016), 79, accessed October 14, 2020, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/seu/detail.action?docID=4731127>.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 83.



distinctions,” arguing for the rights of women to pastor.<sup>72</sup> While Flower still advocated for men as the head of the household, the Assemblies of God reaffirmed the official authority of women in an Executive Presbytery position paper in 1990. A similar paper was contracted in 2010.

As of August 2017, Doug Clay was elected as General Superintendent, and as of 2019, Rick Dubose has served as Assistant General Superintendent. In 2018, Donna Barrett was elected General Secretary, the first woman to be elected into the Assemblies of God Executive Leadership.

### **Assemblies of God Statements & Data**

The Assemblies of God’s official stance of women in ministry can be found in their Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2:

1. Eligibility of women. The Scripture plainly teach that divinely called and qualified women may also serve the church in the ministry of the Word (Joel 2:29; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5). Women who meet the qualifications for ministerial credentials are eligible for whatever grade of credentials their qualifications warrant and have the right to administer the ordinances of the church and are eligible to serve in all levels of church ministry, and or/district and General Council leadership.<sup>73</sup>

The Assemblies of God would not exist without the aid of women. The involvement of women in the fellowship began strong with a desire to remain inclusive of both genders. The table below shows a rare depiction of women’s ministerial function within the Assemblies of God in 1918.

Figure 1:

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>73</sup> “Constitution & Bylaws of The General Council of the Assemblies of God,” 131, last modified August 1, 2019, accessed October 17, 2020, <https://ag.org/About/About-the-AG/Constitution-and-Bylaws>.

A BREAKDOWN OF MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL  
OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN 1918: PERCENTAGE OF  
WOMEN CLERGY INVOLVED IN EACH CATEGORY

Functions	% Women
Pastors	4
Assistant Ministers	50
Missionaries (home)	64
Missionaries (foreign)	45
Evangelists	15
Total Ministers	21

From this table, women comprised of 21% of total ministers. While their role as pastors was limited, their role as assistant ministers and missionaries was fairly equal to that of men.<sup>74</sup>

Throughout the years, the Assemblies of God has published position papers on controversial topics or ideas within Christianity. On August 2010, the General Presbytery adopted “The Role of Women in Ministry,” a position paper stating the fellowship’s stance on female ministry (for the full position paper, see Appendix A).

The paper begins with a declaration of the Bible as the final authority for all positions made within the fellowship. The paper then notes the historical and global representation of women’s leadership and impact in ministry. The Assemblies of God believes that the spiritual leadership of women has been less eagerly accepted as churches have moved to a more

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<sup>74</sup> Charles H. Barfoot and Gerald T. Sheppard, “Prophetic vs. Priestly Religion: The Changing Role of Women Clergy in Classical Pentecostal Churches,” *Review of Religious Research* 22, no. 1 (September 1980): 10.

structured approach, seeing men at the forefront of church leadership.<sup>75</sup> While this may ring true for the Assemblies of God, there are a number of women to recognize as lead ministers in early Pentecostalism, such as Maria B. Woodworth-Etter, Aimee Semple McPherson, Alice Reynolds Flower, Anna Ziese, and Marie Burgess Brown.<sup>76</sup> While women more freely practiced ministry in a leadership capacity, the number of women in leadership dropped significantly in the 1920s, rising again only recently.<sup>77</sup> The tension between strong female leadership and weak female leadership is widely due to the cultural context that a woman finds herself in, according to the Assemblies of God.

Ultimately, the Assemblies of God condemns all discrimination and boasting by men *and* women.<sup>78</sup> While they acknowledge that culture may behave differently, the Assemblies of God aims to redeem culture through a Kingdom mindset, specifically in their effort to promote the Great Commission. In their concluding remarks to the position paper, the Assemblies of God states, “The Assemblies of God has been blessed and must continue to be blessed by the ministry of God’s gifted and commissioned daughters. The Bible repeatedly affirms that God pours out His Spirit upon both men and women and thereby gifts both sexes for ministry in His Church. Therefore, we must continue to affirm the gifts of women in ministry and spiritual leadership.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> “The Role of Women in Ministry,” accessed October 9, 2020, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Position-Papers/The-Role-of-Women-in-Ministry>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

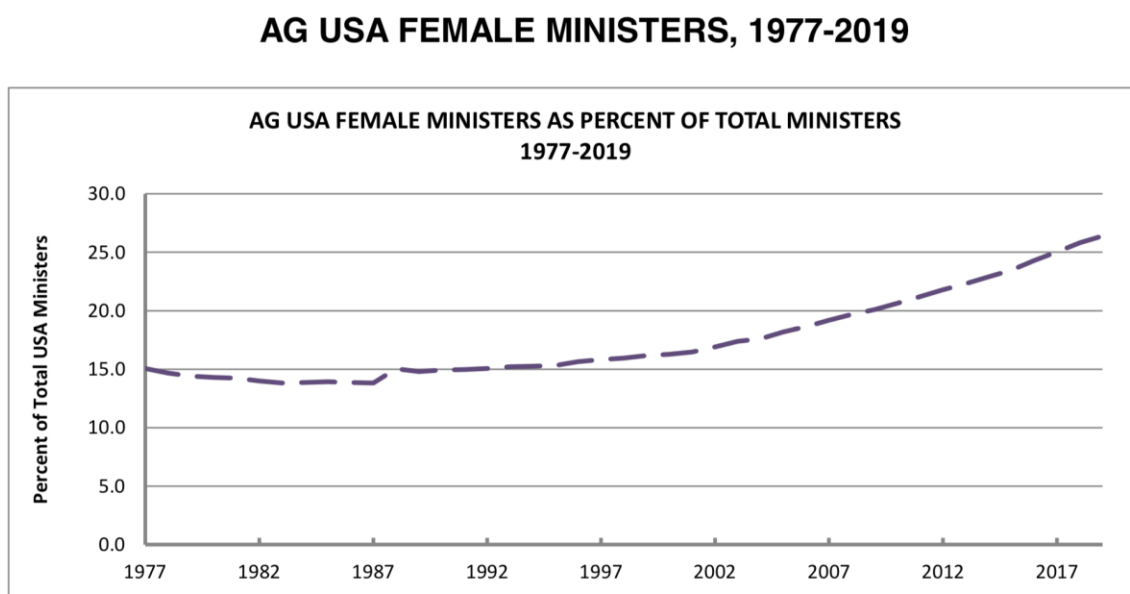
<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 7–8.

To further study the contribution women have made to the Assemblies of God, I accessed multiple statistical analyses from the Assemblies of God website. I first accessed the “Female Ministers 1977 through 2019” report, a report that held specific statistics for the role of female ministers in the Assemblies of God since 1977. The female minister number, numeric change, total percent, and the number of ordained, licensed, and special licensed female ministers was included in this data (see APPENDIX B and C). The data, however, did not include the parallel data for males. Figure 2 shows the percent of females as total ministers within the Assemblies of God from 1977-2019.

Figure 2:



As of 1977, women comprised of 15% of total ministers, and men comprised of 85% of total ministers. From 1978 to 1990, however, there was a dip in the total percent of female

ministers, dropping to as low as 13.8% in 1983. As of 2019, the total percent of ministers was 26.4%.<sup>80</sup>

I then accessed the “2003 Full Statistical Report” and the “2018 Full Statistical Report” to compare data of male and female ministers over the course of fifteen years. 2003 was the oldest year in the A.G. statistical data base that contained the full report. These full reports included the credential status, marital status, and ministry status of males and females. The reports also gave the total number of male and female ministers, aligning with Figure 2.

Below, I will provide charts created from the data of the reports and give an explanation of each chart. To see the specific data from the reports, refer to appendices D and E.

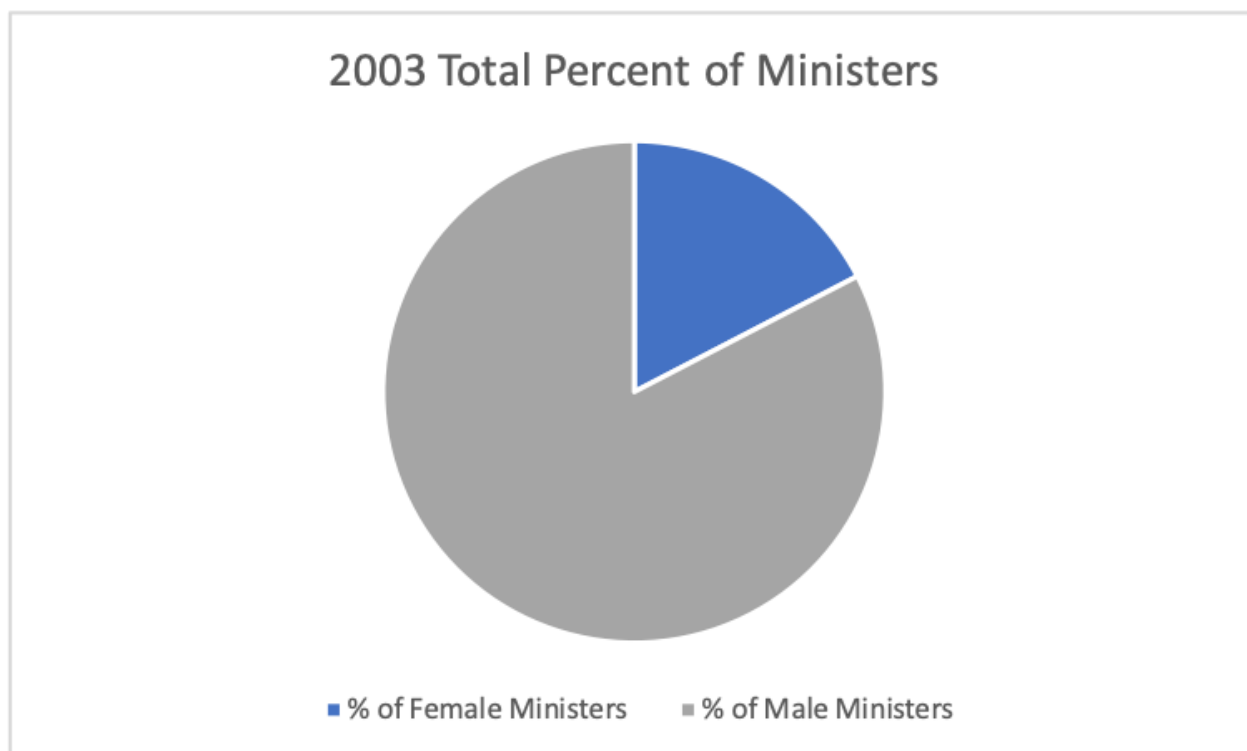
Figures 3 and 4 show the total percent of ministers in the Assemblies of God in 2003 and 2018. The total percent of ministers was gathered from males and females who were credentialed, licensed, special licensed, or ordained with the Assemblies of God. In 2003, women comprised 17.4% of total ministers compared to men who comprised 82.6%, as represented in Figure 3.<sup>81</sup>

Figure 3:

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<sup>80</sup> “Female Ministers 1977 through 2019,” accessed October 16, 2020, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>.

<sup>81</sup> “2003 Full Statistical Report,” 61, accessed October 16, 2020, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>.



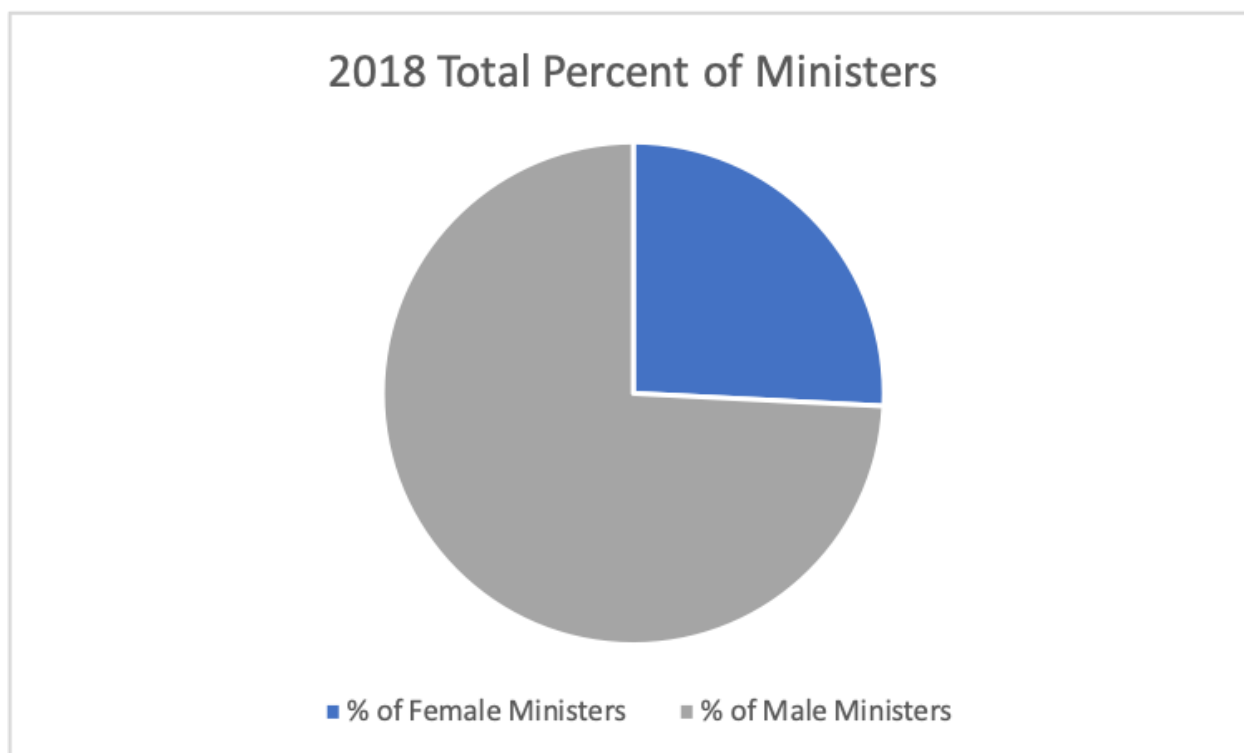
Specifically, 5,688 ministers were female, and 27,044 ministers were male.

In 2018, however, women increased to 25% of total ministers, a 7.6% increase in fifteen years as seen in Figure 4.<sup>82</sup>

Figure 4:

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<sup>82</sup> “2018 Full Statistical Report,” 86, accessed October 16, 2020, <https://ag.org/About/Statistics>.



Compared to 2003, 9,857 ministers were female, a little over 4,000 increase in fifteen years. It is evident, therefore, that female ministers increased by half a percent every year. On average, around 267 new women were either certified, licensed, or ordained with the Assemblies of God every year from 2003 to 2018.

The full statistical reports also included the ministry status of males and females. As indicated in the report, individuals could potentially be listed in more than one category, making the statistics slightly skewed. Individuals who were listed more than once were not indicated in the data.

There were fourteen, specific ministry statuses indicated on the report; however, I will only be focusing on the two statuses that are found in the local church: church staff members and

lead pastors.<sup>83</sup> The fourteen ministry statuses listed were Chaplains, Church Staff Members, Disabled, District Officials, Evangelists, World Missionaries, U.S. Missionaries, Senior Pastors, Section Presbyters, Seniors (65 and older), Senior active, Senior semi-retired, Senior retired, and Teachers (A/G colleges).<sup>84</sup> The report was unclear as to what “church staff members” included. Church staff members could potentially mean executive pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors, children’s pastors, directors, coordinators, and many other church staff titles. Because of this lack of clarity, we cannot determine “church staff members” to mean only pastors. It remains too broad.

In 2003, church staff members consisted of 20.1% of total ministers. Senior Pastors consisted of 34.8% of total ministers. The ministry status between males and females differed drastically, as shown in Figure 5. Women encompassed 22% of church staff members while men encompassed 78% of church staff members.<sup>85</sup>

Senior pastors differed more drastically with women encompassing 4% of senior pastors while men encompassed 94%. The percentage of female senior pastors, therefore, did not change since 1918 (refer back to Figure 1).

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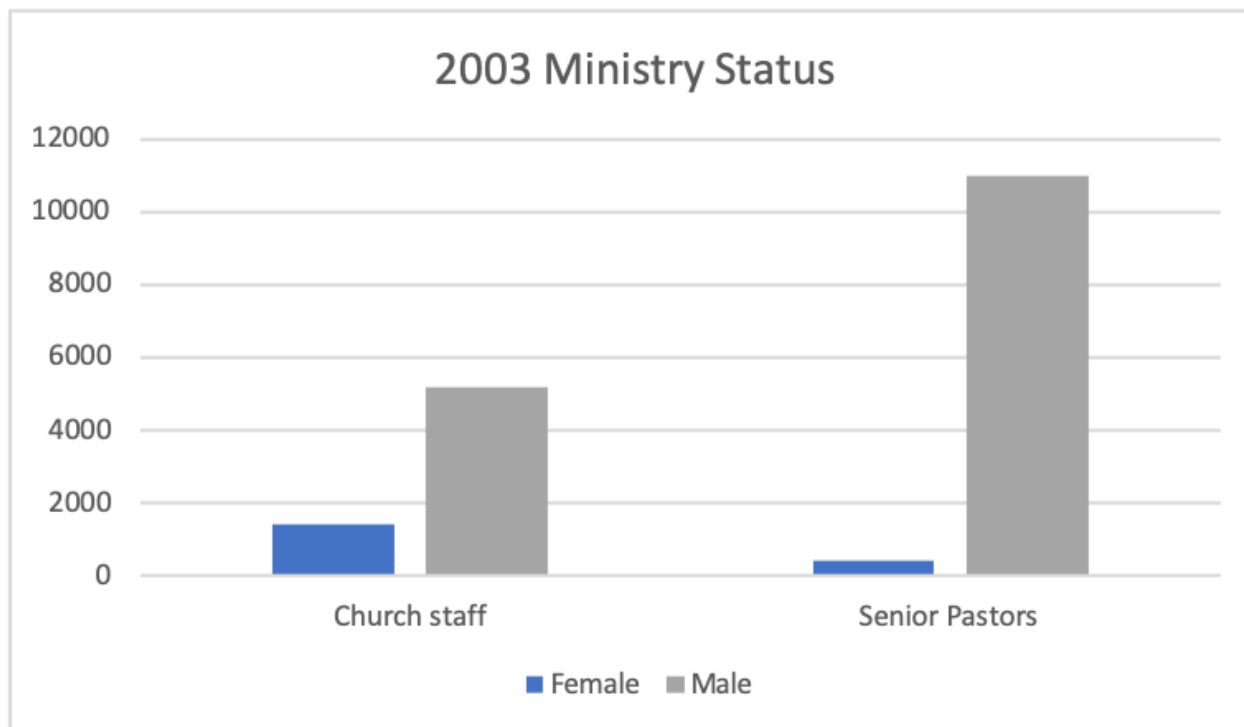
<sup>83</sup> Church Staff Member and Senior Pastor also comprise of the highest percentages in ministry status with Seniors consisting of 23.5% in 2003 and 16.9% in 2018.

<sup>84</sup> The categories of Active and Semi-retired Seniors were discontinued in 2017, so the 2018 full report only includes 12 ministry statuses.

<sup>85</sup> “2003 Full Statistical Report,” 61.



Figure 5:



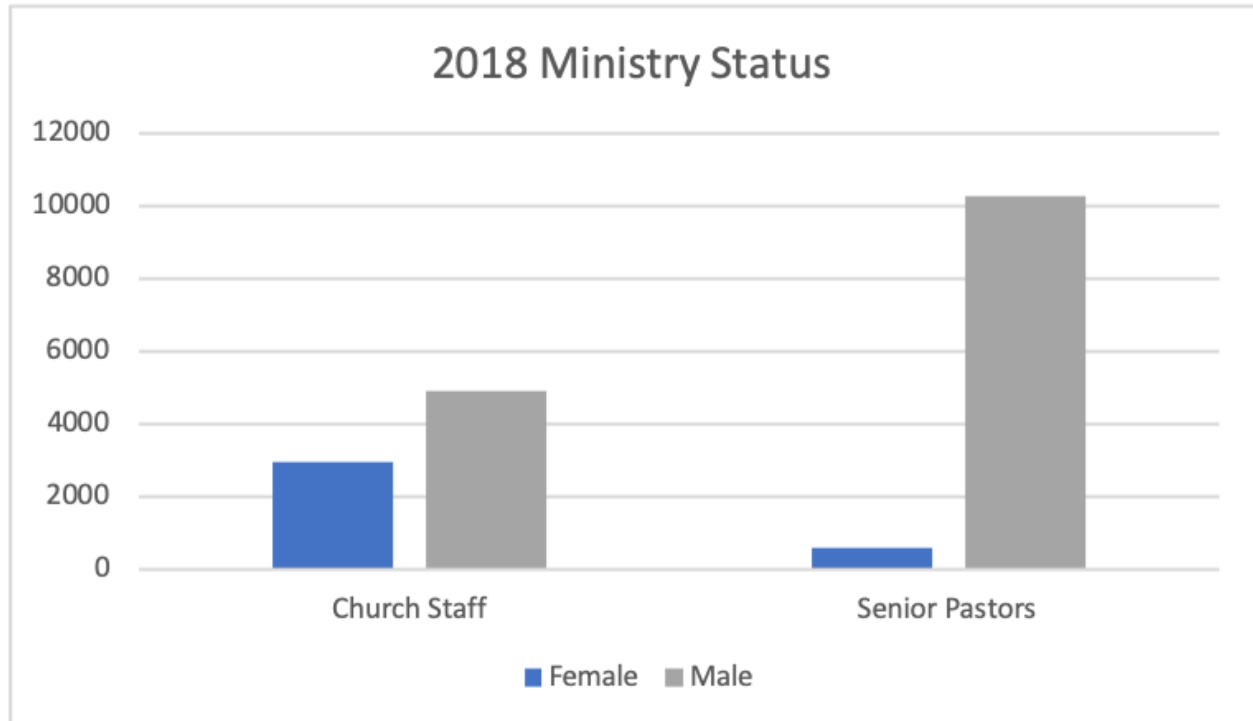
From 2003 to 2018, women’s status in church staff has more than doubled. Their senior pastor status, however, has barely increased. The results of female ministry status in 2018 is represented in Figure 6.

37% of church staff comprised of women in 2018, a 15% increase since 2003. 5% of senior pastors comprised of women in 2018, a 1% increase in fifteen years.<sup>86</sup>

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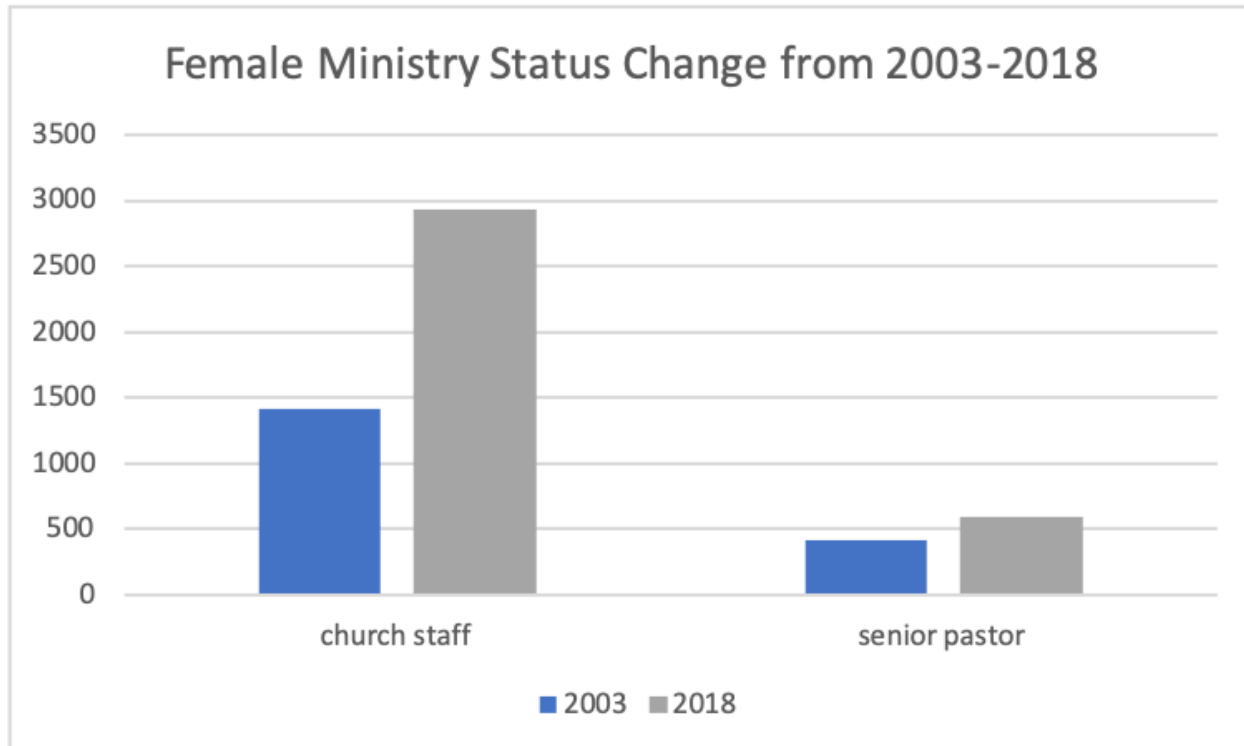
<sup>86</sup> “2018 Full Statistical Report,” 86.

Figure 6:



Over the span of fifteen years, the status of females as church staff member increased by 15%. That is an average of 1% increase every year, specifically around 100 new women every year. Females status as senior pastor only increased by 1% over the span of fifteen years, specifically around 12 new women every year. The change in female ministry from 2003-2018 is represented in Figure 7.

Figure 7:

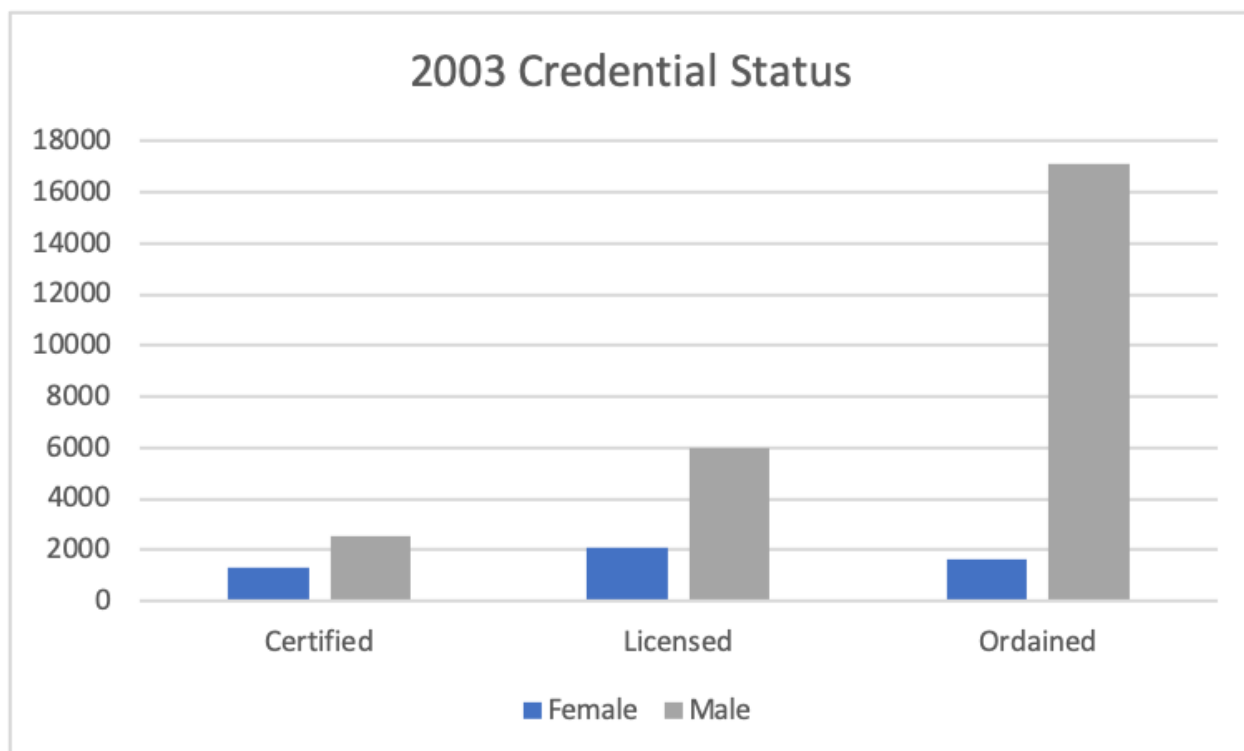


It is important to recognize that the data of ministry status for females in 2018 only accounts for 6,526 out 9,857 women, approximately two-thirds. This includes the notion that women may be counted in more than one ministry category. What is the ministry status of the other 1/3 of women that are not mentioned or accounted for?

Figures 8 and 9 represent the credential status of female ministers compared to men. Credential status includes the total number of males and females who are certified, licensed, or ordained with the Assemblies of God. Ordination is considered the highest credentialing status a minister can have, and certification is the lowest credentialing status a minister can have. A male or female cannot be included in the total percent of ministers if they do not have one of these three credentialing statuses.

In 2003, 15% of ministers in the Assemblies of God were certified, 24.9% were licensed, and 57.3% were ordained. Specifically, 27% of ministers certified and 26% of ministers licensed were women. Only 9% of ministers ordained were women as represented by Figure 8.<sup>87</sup>

Figure 8:



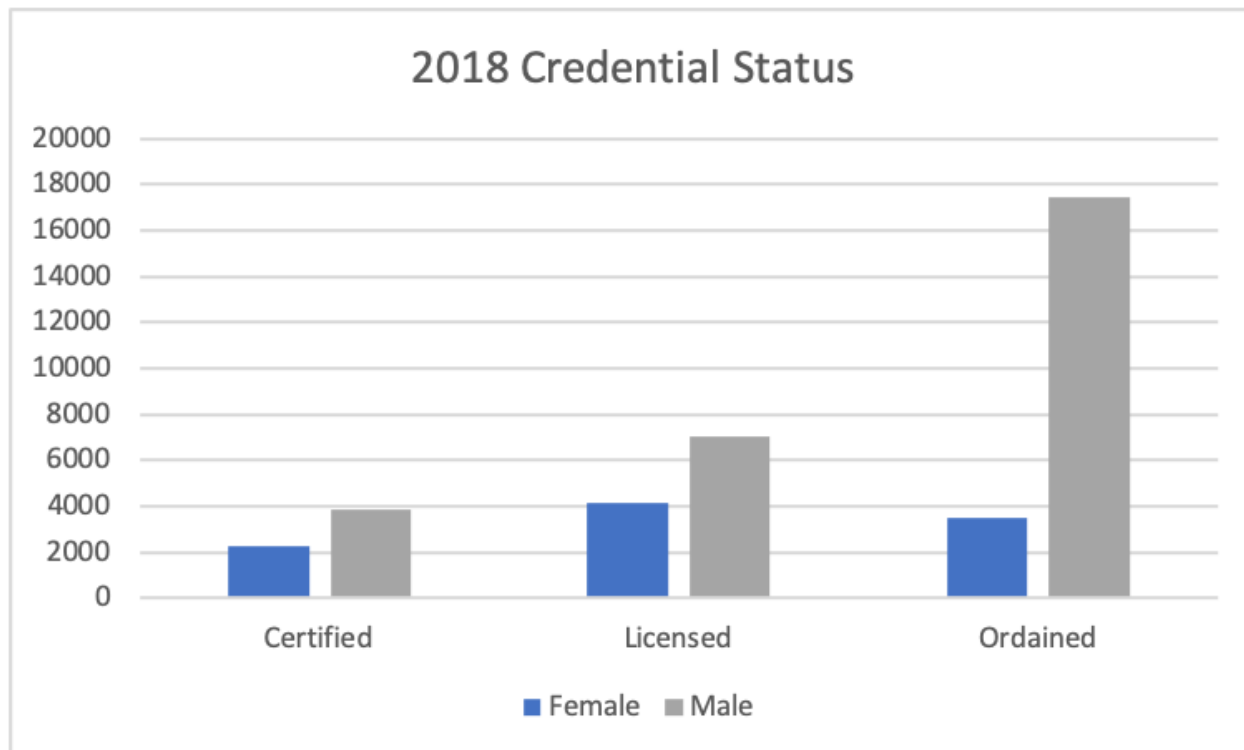
Fifteen years later, the certification, licensing, and ordination of females has increased. In 2018, 15.9% of ministers were certified, 29.3% of ministers were licensed, and 54.8% of ministers were ordained.

From that total, 37% of ministers certified, 37% of ministers licensed, and 17% of ministers ordained were women as shown in Figure 9.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> “2003 Full Statistical Report,” 61.

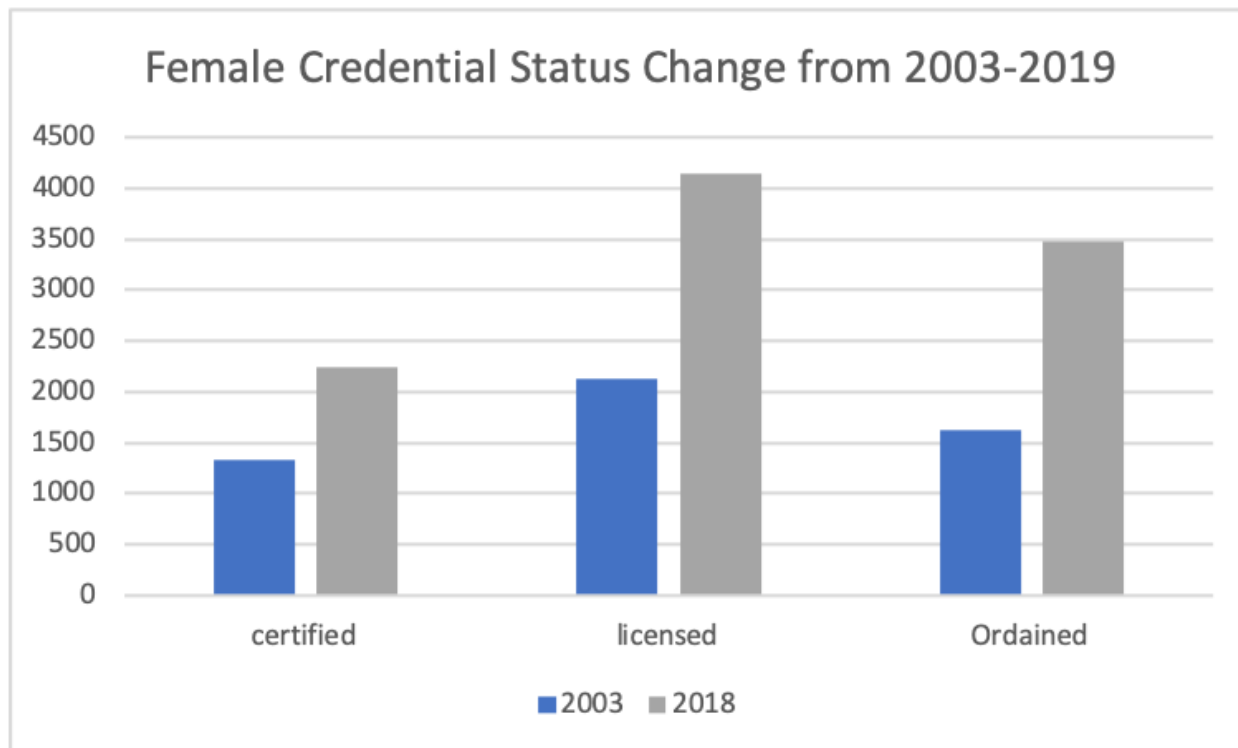
<sup>88</sup> “2018 Full Statistical Report,” 86.

Figure 9:



From 2003 to 2018, certification of women in the Assemblies of God increased by 22%, meaning that on average, around 60 new women were credentialed every year. On average, 134 women were licensed every year for fifteen years, increasing the percent of licensed women by 12.1%. The ordination of women increased by 8% over the course of fifteen years, specifically adding on average 124 women every year. This change in data is represented in Figure 10.

Figure 10:



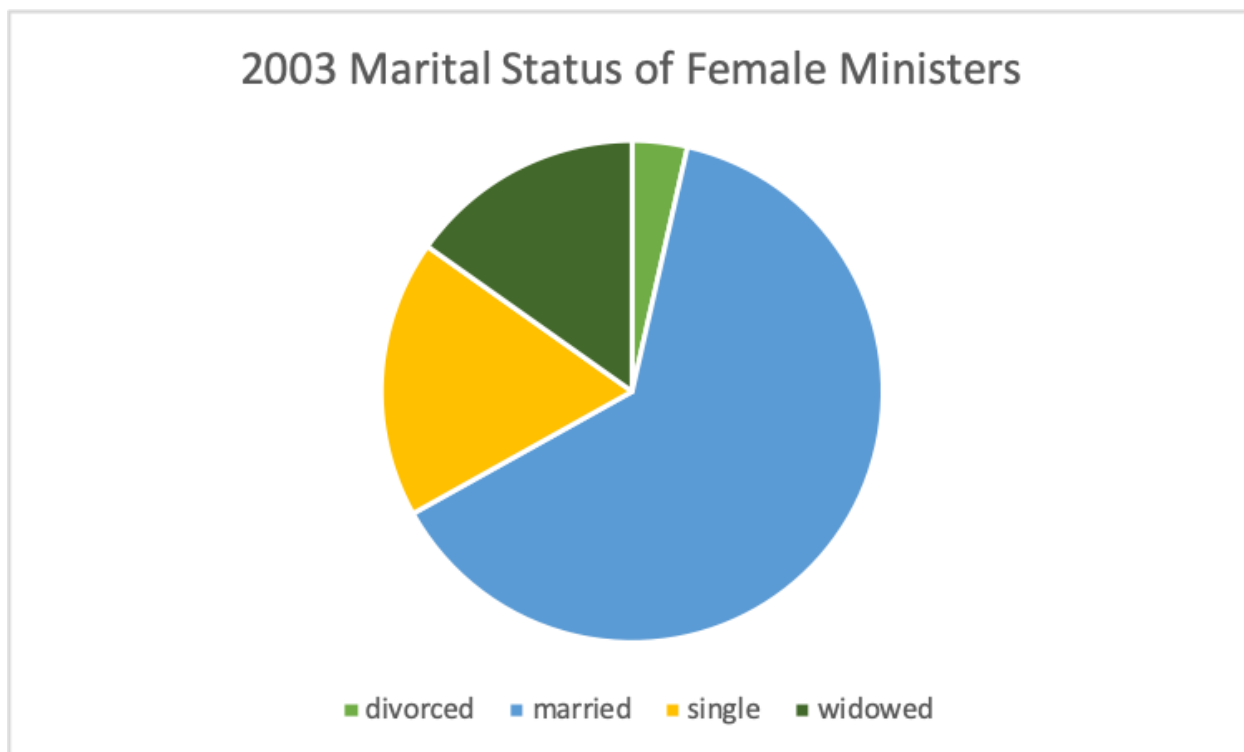
Figures 11 and 12 represent the marital status of female ministers in 2003 and 2018. Marital statuses consisted of Divorced, Married, Single, and Widowed. In 2003, 1% of total ministers were divorced, 88.6% of total ministers were married, 6.1% of total ministers were single, and 4.3% of total ministers were widowed. From those percentages, 60% of divorced ministers were women, 12.4% of married ministers were women, 51.3% of single ministers were women, and 62% of widowed ministers were women.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> “2003 Full Statistical Report,” 61.

From a different perspective, 4% of female ministers were divorced, 63.4% were married, 18% were single, and 15.2% were widowed as represented in Figure 11.

Figure 11:



In 2018, the marital status of ministers slightly changed from 2003. 1.8% of total ministers were divorced, increasing by 0.8%. 87.9% of total ministers were married, decreasing by 0.7%.<sup>90</sup> 6% of total ministers were single, decreasing by 0.1%, and 4.3% of total ministers were widowed. From these totals, 59.3% of divorced ministers were women, decreasing by 0.7%. 21.3% of married ministers were women, increasing by 8.9%. 60.4% of single ministers

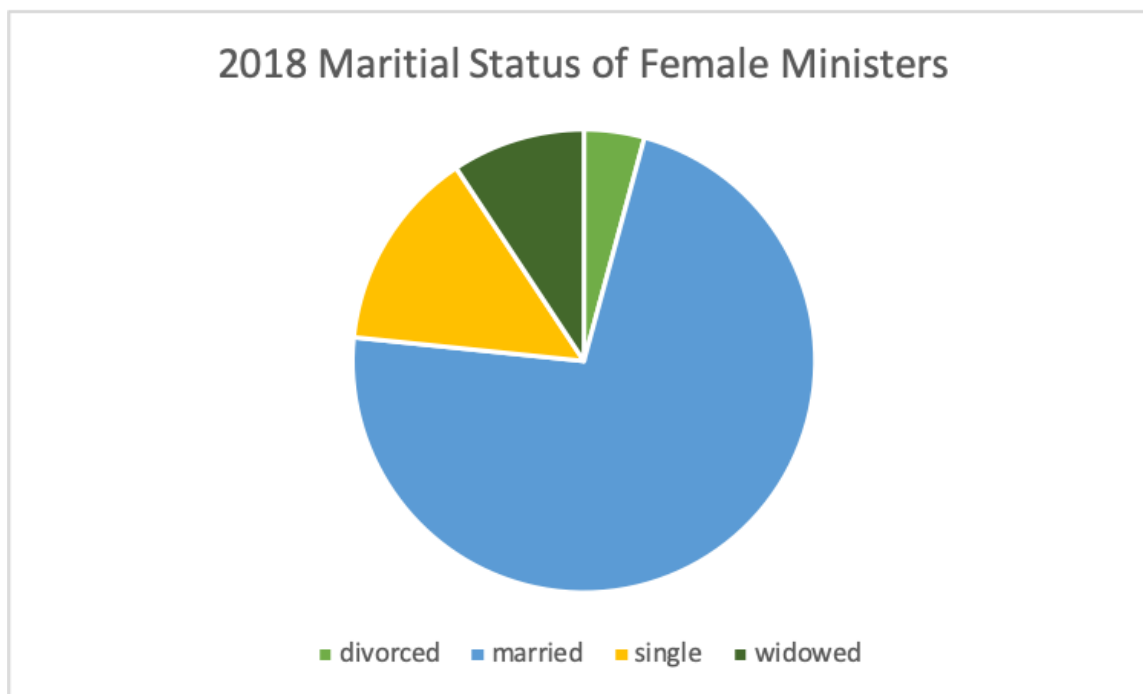
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<sup>90</sup> I am curious if this loss in married ministers was made up by the increase in divorced ministers.

were women, increasing by 9.1%. 55.8% of widowed ministers were women, decreasing by 6.2%.<sup>91</sup>

As shown in Figure 12, 4.2% of female ministers were divorced, increasing by 0.2%. 72.4% of female ministers were married, increasing by 9%. 14.1% of female ministers were single, decreasing by 3.9%. 9.3% of female ministers were widowed, decreasing by 5.9%.

Figure 12:



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<sup>91</sup> “2018 Full Statistical Report,” 86.



## Conclusion

I have learned that women have the same right and opportunity to ministerial leadership as men based upon what Scripture says in Acts 2:16-18 and Galatians 3:28. I have also learned that throughout history, women have already positioned themselves in pastoral roles. Whether these women participated in revivals or found their own denominations, women's contribution to ministry paved the way for the spread of Pentecostalism. I have learned that in the Assemblies of God, women are slowly rising to equality with men. An increase in women's credentialing status could reflect an increase in their total percent. Gender roles remain a significant setback to the inclusion of women in pastoral leadership because individuals cannot overcome presupposed prejudices of authority. The concept of women in pastoral leadership, although not new, is still at a disadvantage within the church realm.

Based upon these conclusions, the questions in which I can answer so far are as follows:

1. What does the Bible say about women in ministerial leadership?
2. How has women in ministerial leadership progressed within the Assemblies of God?
3. Are there differences in perception between men and women within the church, and does this affect their leadership capability and/or influence?

My literature review presented convincing research related to biblical and historical arguments for women in pastoral leadership. This review also presented past and current statistical data from the Assemblies of God regarding female pastoral leadership. My literature review lacked, however, in drawing an accurate representation of women's pastoral involvement within the Assemblies of God and how that involvement has grown throughout the past fifty years. For example, while statistics included the total number of female ministers, the specific ministry status was unspecific. 1/3 of women were unaccounted for in 2018 (see APPENDIX E).

It was also difficult to collect peer-reviewed articles and journal regarding my topic; therefore, my Gender Roles & Authority section was very limited. There has not been adequate research on the topics, specifically for women in ministry.

In the next chapter, I will discuss potential solutions to increase the number of women being credentialed, licensed, or ordained with the Assemblies of God.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Discussion & Solution Proposal**

This chapter will discuss the research from the previous chapter and use that research to propose potential solutions to increase the total percent of women in ministry within the Assemblies of God. In order for a woman to be calculated in the total percent of ministers, she must either be credentialed, licensed, or ordained with the Assemblies of God. Without one of these three credentialing statuses, a woman is not considered a minister of the Assemblies of God.

#### **Research Discussion**

As of 2019, women comprised of 26.4% of total ministers. There was a 12.6% increase for women since 1983, a total of 36 years (see APPENDIX B and C). If we assume that there is another 12.6% increase in the total percent of female ministers in the next 36 years, that means women will encompass only 39% of total ministers by 2055. By 2091, women would encompass 51.6% of total ministers. This information is staggering. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the increase in female ministers seemed to jump from a 0.35% increase a year to around a 0.5% increase a year. While this is good news, a larger increase is still needed to balance men and women in pastoral ministry within the next fifty years.

According to Figure 9, over half of ministers' credential status is through ordination, but only 17% of women are ordained. While women make up 37% of ministers certified and licensed, the ordination of women is significantly less. If we are to see an increase in the total percent of ministers, especially of those ordained, then more women need to be certified, licensed, and ordained every year. While women may be authorized to preach, "they are not

advancing in ways that would lead them into pastoral roles and other roles of authority.”<sup>92</sup> More women need to be ordained if they are to fully embrace the call of full-time pastoral ministry.

## **Solution Proposal**

### *Recognize the Issue*

A problem cannot be solved if the problem is not first acknowledged. We must recognize the issue, not to shame or point fingers, but to work towards a solution. Women have the authority to preach and lead churches, yet there are few ordained and active women in pastoral leadership to represent such a stance. We can make the numbers and data sound good, but how do they actually look? How are we advocating for the future generations of women in pastoral ministry? There is an issue, but it is not unsolvable! Let us all recognize the need to improve and work together, man and woman, to accomplish more for the kingdom of God.

### *Executive Leadership Sets Example*

I would propose that the executive leadership of the Assemblies of God needs to reflect equality between men and women before the total percent of female ministers can represent such equality too. Leadership reflects its congregation, a concept that most churches live by when furthering their growth and development. The same can be true for gender. Out of six executive leaders in the national office of the Assemblies of God, only one is a woman. Donna Barrett was the first woman to be elected into the executive leadership team in 2019. Most district office leadership is male, too. How can we further the reach of women in full-time ministry if they are not shown their ability to? Leading by example ensures the future generation of women in

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<sup>92</sup> Zachary M. Tackett, “Callings, Giftings, and Empowerment: Preaching Women and American Pentecostalism in Historical and Theological Perspective,” 85.

ministry and their confidence in such a role. Jory Micah, an American Pentecostal Feminist Theologian, suggests that the Assemblies of God should be intentional about hiring a female pastor for every male pastor they hire after conducting a survey and finding the fellowship has become indifferent to equality.<sup>93</sup> This is a seamless next step for all districts to follow as they recognize and implement the equivalent leadership of the national office.

### *Educate Future Ministers*

How can the number of women who are credentialed, licensed, and ordained increase? I would propose to first biblically educate men and women as to their equal calling and authority to pastoral leadership, beginning before or during their college experience. Most rejections of women in ministry are birthed from Scripture, so educating men and women about the equality and co-laboring they are charged with will bring unity and likeness of mind. Men and women should also be educated about credentialing opportunities with the Assemblies of God in colleges, universities, and other educational extension sites. The Assemblies of God has connection with seventeen schools and universities throughout the United States, not to mention the countless extension sites for some of those schools, such as Northwest University and Southeastern University. While certain colleges and universities do include education for credentialing, I believe that it is the district's job to personally reach out, educate, and form relationships with future ministers. If districts explain to future ministers what the credentialing or licensing process looks like and how they can qualify, it will better prepare future ministers to acquire their credentialing.

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<sup>93</sup> Joy Langford, "Feminism and Leadership in the Pentecostal Movement," *Feminist Theology* 26, no. 1 (2017): 78, accessed March 18, 2019, <https://seu.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLAI9KZ170918000281&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

The Assemblies of God is broken down into District Councils, with each state containing at least one council. Larger states, such as Florida and California, contain multiple districts. Information for districts is accessible through the Assemblies of God official website, allowing an individual to contact the office for further credentialing directions. The website also includes requirements for an individual to apply for credentials.

### *Leadership Development*

It is difficult for women to find their place among men in the pastoral world, and remain there, if they are not properly led and developed. Leadership development is crucial, a call Jesus explicitly tells His followers in Matthew 28:18-20. The Great Commission is discipleship. Fortunately, the Assemblies of God promotes The Network of Women Ministers. This network exists to,

connect and inspire credentialed women ministers, and those seeking credentials. We are dedicated to building community among our women ministers and providing leadership development opportunities. Our aim is to model Biblical leadership through the various ministries in which we serve. We want to equip districts and the local church body to empower women to leadership within their churches and allow younger generations to see God's spirit poured out on all flesh.<sup>94</sup>

The Network of Women Ministers just announced leadership development cohorts for credentialed women under forty years old. U40, as it is called, is set to launch for free in January 2021.<sup>95</sup> In just six hours, the network maxed out their registration and waitlist for the available cohorts. Each cohort will have a trained facilitator and up to four Under 40 credentialed female

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<sup>94</sup> "Network of Women Ministers," *Network of Women Ministers*, accessed October 18, 2020, <http://www.womenministers.ag.org>.

<sup>95</sup> "Under 40 Cohorts," *Network of Women Ministers*, accessed October 30, 2020, <https://www.womenministers.ag.org/nwmu40cohort>.

ministers who will meet online for nine months.<sup>96</sup> The goal of these cohorts is to provide “an environment where each participant will have an allotted amount of time to present a challenge, project, or decision and receive feedback from cohort members.”<sup>97</sup> Overall, the participants are to gain leadership development, networking opportunities, peer mentoring, and relationships with ministry colleagues,<sup>98</sup> items that have previously never been made readily available to credentialed women in the Assemblies of God.

### *Women’s Responsibility*

Ultimately, women need to believe in their call and not subordinate themselves when faced with the same opportunities as men.<sup>99</sup> If a woman has been called by God to full time, pastoral ministry, she should wholeheartedly run after that call. As Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.”<sup>100</sup> Males and females in ministry do not operate out of reverence or obedience to mankind; instead, men and women are called to serve and obey the one who has called: God. As the author of Hebrews states, “...let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> I highly recommend reading the book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* by Facebook’s chief operating officer, Sheryl Sandberg for more information on this topic. The book offers hard data and research for how and why women limit themselves when it comes to opportunities of employment. The book also provides practical steps and advice for women to achieve personal and professional achievement.

<sup>100</sup> “Bible Gateway Passage: Colossians 3:23 - New International Version,” *Bible Gateway*, accessed October 17, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203%3A23&version=NIV>.

our eyes on Jesus,”<sup>101</sup> nothing more. At the end of every believer’s life, they will give account for all the work they did on earth. Women’s excuse cannot be out of fear or indifference. Future generations depend on women’s obedience to the call, and they should carry that responsibility with great fervor and endurance.

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<sup>101</sup> “Bible Gateway Passage: Hebrews 12 - New International Version,” *Bible Gateway*, accessed October 17, 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews%2012&version=NIV>.



## **Conclusion**

Women in pastoral leadership is still an uncommon sight among most churches. While women in pastoral leadership is slowly progressing in the Assemblies of God, they have not reached equality with men. They are not even close. Why has the church fallen behind on such a radical statement? Why is gender injustice still prevalent almost a quarter way through the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Women have been called by God to be pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and much more, yet their opportunities are slim in comparison with that of men. Women are still discriminated based upon their gender even though Scripture equalizes them (Galatians 3:28).

The journey towards equality is not meant to shame or scorn but rather encourage male and female to work together and co-labor in the faith. Jesus set an example in the Gospels, and Paul set an example all throughout his missionary journeys. Equalizing men and women as pastors, missionaries, and evangelists could open up a part of the kingdom of God believers have never seen before. Are we willing to set our prejudices and biases aside and work together for the kingdom?

This thesis has attempted to address the role of women in pastoral leadership within the Assemblies of God and present factual statistics for its progress and current standings. While there is always more research to be done, the research conducted presents another voice in the growing noise of women advocating for their equality.

Areas of future research for this topic are extensive. I would like to narrow the topic of female pastors based upon their age, ethnicity, race, and geographical location within the Assemblies of God. In the full statistical reports, age, ethnicity, and race was included for ministers as a whole but not based upon gender. Looking at these demographics based upon gender could show geographical areas of higher credential status or ministry status and areas of

lower credential status or ministry status. It could even show credential status and ministry status of multiple races.

I would also like to see the specific ministry status that all credentialed women have in the Assemblies of God. Only twelve ministry statuses were included in the reports, and the statuses were very broad as to what their specific role was. How many women are executive pastors? How many women are associate pastors? How many women are youth or children's pastors? Information of this kind was not provided, but I believe it could show ministry roles in which women have yet to step into.

I could also broaden the topic by comparing the number of female pastors in the Assemblies of God to other Christians denominations. The Assemblies of God considers themselves a leader in equalizing women with men in ministry, so I would be interested to see how other denominations are doing in this area. This information could help the Assemblies of God learn from denominations who have paved the way for ministry egalitarianism while allowing the fellowship to set an example for denominations who are just beginning to establish equality.

Even though women in pastoral leadership is progressing in the Assemblies of God, there are still few indications that they are living out this role. Women are not taking the necessary means to become licensed, credentialed, or ordained with the Assemblies of God. Action is needed to fully incorporate women into equal ministerial leadership roles with men. Whether this equality happens over more time, through education, through conversation, or through specific action, something is needed to increase the total percent of female ministers.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **The Role of Women in Ministry As Described in Holy Scripture**

**(Adopted by the General Presbytery in session August 9-11, 2010)**

Supernatural manifestations and gifts of the Holy Spirit have played a distinctive role in the origin, development, and growth of the Assemblies of God. Since the earliest days of our Fellowship, spiritual gifting has been evident in the ministries of many outstanding women who pioneered and directed a wide spectrum of ministries. It was not uncommon for a married woman to minister in partnership with her husband. Occasionally, husbands worked at secular professions to support the active ministries of their wives. Many women chose to forego marriage to better fulfill the ministries to which the Lord had called them. Courageous women served on mission frontiers at home and abroad as missionaries, evangelists, church planters, pastors, educators, and in other roles.

Pentecostals believe that the outpouring of the Spirit begun in the early twentieth century is a true fulfillment of prophecy, “Your sons and daughters will prophesy . . . Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28,29; cf. Acts 2:16–18).<sup>1</sup> That women as well as men are to prophesy is indicative of their inclusion in the ministries of the new covenant age.

### **The Bible as Final Authority**

While the history and practice of the Assemblies of God appears to demonstrate that God blesses the public ministry of women, debate continues as to the proper role of women in spiritual leadership. Since the Bible is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice, it is important to do a fresh study of its teachings and ensure that our approach is not merely subjective and pragmatic.

It is our intention to examine the biblical text as carefully and objectively as possible, using established rules of exegesis and interpretation. We will note both historical and theological guidance. We will also carefully evaluate texts traditionally used to limit or deny the ministries of women.

Always, it is our intention to be faithful to the teachings of the Bible, God’s inspired and infallible Word to humankind. At the same time, we want to be charitable toward those from other traditions who sincerely may disagree with our findings. We recognize that, occasionally, practical

compromises in nonessential aspects of ministry practice may be in order to most effectively plant the Church in traditionally patriarchal contexts.

### **Historical and Global Precedent**

Historians have observed that in the early days of most revivals, when spiritual fervor is high and the Lord's return is expected at any time, there is often ready acceptance of dynamic, pioneering women ministers. Over time, however, as young churches move toward a more structured ministry, and institutional concerns come to the forefront, the spiritual leadership of women is less readily accepted and church leadership tends to become predominantly male.

The experience of the Assemblies of God has been no exception. Notable women ministers among the early Pentecostals included Maria B. Woodworth-Etter, Aimee Semple McPherson, Alice Reynolds Flower, Anna Ziese, and Marie Burgess Brown. But even though women had great freedom to minister in the early days of the Fellowship, the proportion of women in leadership dropped dramatically beginning in the early 1920s. More recently, the trend is again upward and the number of credentialed women is growing.

Throughout their history, Pentecostals around the world have struggled to apply biblical truth in widely divergent cultural contexts. In some settings, female spiritual leadership is readily accepted; in others, where women have limited ministry, leadership posts are withheld from them. At times there is inconsistency between the leadership a female missionary, for example, has at home and that which she has on the field. There may also be a difference between her ministry opportunities on the field and those of women in the culture she serves. Without doubt, particular cultures have influenced, and continue to influence, the nature and extent of female leadership. While the Church must always be sensitive to cultural concerns, it must nonetheless consistently look to Scripture for principles and directions that rise above particular contextual practices.

### **Biblical Examples of Women in Ministry**

Old Testament history includes accounts of strong female leadership in many roles. The following are striking examples: Miriam was a prophet to Israel during the Exodus, alongside her brothers Moses and Aaron (Exodus 15:20). Deborah, both a prophet and a judge, directed Barak to lead the army of Israel into successful combat against Israel's oppressors (Judges 4 to 5). Huldah, also a prophet, authenticated the scroll of the Law found in the temple and helped spark religious reform in the days of Josiah (2 Kings 22:14–20; 2 Chronicles 34:22–28).

The New Testament also shows that women filled important ministry roles in the Early Church.

Tabitha (Dorcas) initiated an effective benevolence ministry (Acts 9:36). Philip's four unmarried daughters were recognized prophets (Acts 21:8,9). Paul singled out two women, Euodia and Syntyche, as "women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers" (Philippians 4:2,3). Priscilla was another of Paul's exemplary "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (Romans 16:3,4). In Romans 16, Paul greets numerous ministry colleagues, a large number of them women. In these greetings, the word Paul uses to speak of the work (*kopiaō*), or labor, of Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa, and Persis (Romans 16:6,12) is one he uses extensively for the labor of ministry (1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17).

Phoebe, a leader in the church at Cenchrea, was highly commended to the church at Rome by Paul (Romans 16:1,2). Unfortunately, translation biases have often obscured Phoebe's position of leadership, calling her a "servant" (NIV, NASB, ESV). Yet Phoebe was *diakonos* of the church at Cenchrea. Paul regularly used this term for a minister or leader of a congregation and applied it specifically to Jesus Christ, Tychicus, Epaphras,

Timothy, and to his own ministry. Depending on the context, *diakonos* is usually translated "deacon" or "minister." Though some translators have chosen the word deaconess (e.g., RSV, because Phoebe was female), the Greek *diakonos* is a masculine noun. Therefore, it seems likely that *diakonos* was the designation for an official leadership position in the Early Church and the proper translation for Phoebe's role is "deacon" (TNIV, NLT, NRSV) or "minister."

Moreover, a number of translations reflect similar biases by referring to Phoebe as having been a "great help" (NIV) or "helper" (NASB) of many, including Paul himself (Romans 16:2). The Greek term here is *prostatís*, better translated by the NRSV as "benefactor" with its overtones of equality and leadership.

Junia was identified by Paul as an apostle (Romans 16:7). Beginning in the thirteenth century, a number of scholars and translators masculinized her name to Junias, apparently unwilling to admit that there was a female apostle. However, the name Junia is found more than 250 times in Rome alone, while the masculine form Junias is unknown in any Greco-Roman source. Paul clearly was a strong advocate of women in ministry.

These instances of women filling leadership roles in the Bible should be taken as a divinely approved pattern, not as exceptions to divine decrees. Even a limited number of women with scripturally commended leadership roles affirm that God does indeed call women to spiritual leadership.



## **A Biblical Survey of the Role of Women in Ministry**

Of primary importance in defining the scriptural role of women in ministry is the biblical meaning of “ministry”. Of Christ our great model, it was said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served [*diakoneō*], but to serve [*diakoneō*], and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45; cf. Matthew 20:28). The New Testament leadership modeled by Jesus portrays the spiritual leader as a servant, whether male or female. The question of human authority is not of primary significance, though it naturally arises as organization and structure develop.

Genesis 2:18–25. Some expositors have taught that all women should be subordinate to adult men because Eve was created after Adam to be his “helper” (NIV; “help meet”, KJV). Yet the word *ēzer* (“helper”) is never used in the Hebrew Bible with a subordinate meaning. Seventeen out of the twenty times it is used, it refers to God as the helper. Eve was created to be a help (*kenegdo*) “suitable” or “corresponding to” Adam, not a subordinate.

Some argue that God created men and women with different characteristics and desires, and that these differences explain why leadership roles should be withheld from women. Others attribute these perceived differences to culture and social expectations imposed on children from birth to adulthood. Physical differences and distinctive biological functions are obvious; but it is only by implication that gender differences can be made to suggest leadership limitations.

### **Paul’s Emphasis on Charismatic Ministry**

Ministry in the New Testament is charismatic in nature. It is made possible and energized as the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes spiritual gifts (*charismata*) to each member of the body of Christ (Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:7–11, 27, 28; Ephesians 4:7–12; 1 Peter 4:10–11). While some gifts are a spontaneous work of the Spirit and others are recognized ministry gifts to the Body, all are given for service without regard to gender differentiation. For example, the gift of prophecy is explicitly for both men and women: “Your sons and your daughters will prophesy” (Acts 2:17). The New Testament confirms that women received and exercised this gift of the Spirit (Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5).

If Peter found certain statements by Paul hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16), it is no surprise that we, removed by nearly two thousand additional years of history, would share his struggle in interpreting some Pauline passages. While the original audiences were familiar with the problems that Paul addressed, we are left to reconstruct them and apply his prescriptions as best we can in light of the larger context of his letters and biblical revelation. And we, like Peter (2 Peter 3:15), must respect and love our brothers and sisters who hold alternative interpretations on issues that

are not critical to our salvation or standing before God. We only request that those interpretations be expressed and practiced in love and consideration for all of God's children, both men and women.

First Corinthians 11:3–12. The statement that “the man is the head of the woman” has for centuries been used to justify the practice of male superiority and to exclude women from spiritual leadership. Two alternative translations for *kephalē* (“head”), debated widely by contemporary evangelical scholars, are (1) “authority over” and (2) “source” or “origin.” Both meanings are found in literature of Paul’s time.

Taking the passage as a whole, the second meaning fits as well as or better than the first meaning, leading to the summary statement of verse 12: “As woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.” Even the relationship between the eternal Son and the Father—“the head of Christ is God” (11:3)—fits better as “source” than “authority over” (cf. John 8:42). Without attempting definitively to resolve this debate, we do not find sufficient evidence in *kephalē* to deny leadership roles to women (in light of biblical examples of women in positions of spiritual authority, and in light of the whole counsel of Scripture).

First Corinthians 14:34–36. There are only two passages in the entire New Testament that might seem to contain a prohibition against the ministry of women (1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:12). Since these must be placed alongside Paul’s other statements and practices, they can hardly be absolute, unequivocal prohibitions of the ministry of women. Instead, they seem to be dealing with specific, local problems that needed correction. Therefore, Paul’s consistent affirmation of ministering women among his churches must be seen as his true perspective, rather than the apparent prohibitions of these two passages, themselves subject to conflicting interpretation.

There are various interpretations of what Paul was limiting when he said, “women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak” (1 Corinthians 14:34). Paul uses a word to limit the speech of women (*sigatō*) that previously has been used to limit the speech of those speaking in tongues if there is no interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:28) and prophets if a prophecy is given to another person (v. 30). It is only under such specific circumstances that the speech of tongues speakers, prophets, and women are to be silenced in the church. Under what circumstances then, is the speech of women to be limited?

Options include (1) chatter in public services, (2) ecstatic disruptions, (3) certain authoritative ministries (such as judging prophecies), and (4) asking questions during the service. It is apparent that Paul permitted women both to pray and prophesy in public worship at Corinth (1 Corinthians

11:5). Moreover, Paul advised that those who prophesy (evidently including women) should be among the ones to judge prophecies (1 Corinthians 14:29). Therefore, as with Paul's constraints on both men and women tongues speakers and prophets, it may be that Paul's additional constraints on women have to do with other forms of disruptive speech.

While the precise nature of Paul's prohibition in this text is a matter of ongoing study, we do conclude that it does not prohibit female leadership, but like the rest of the chapter, it admonishes that "everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

First Timothy 2:11–15. The meaning and application of Paul's statement, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent" (1 Timothy 2:12), have puzzled interpreters and resulted in a variety of positions on the role of women in ministry and spiritual leadership.

From the above survey of passages on exemplary women in ministry, it is clear that Paul recognized the ministry of women. There were obvious problems in Ephesus, some relating to women. Some women were evidently given to immodest apparel and adornment (1 Timothy 2:9). The younger widows were "into the habit of being idle . . . And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to" (1 Timothy 5:13). In his second letter to Timothy, Paul warned against depraved persons (possibly including women) who manipulated "weak-willed," or "gullible," women (2 Timothy 3:6).

A reading of the entire passage of 1 Timothy 2:9–15 strongly suggests that Paul was giving Timothy advice about dealing with some heretical teachings and practices specifically involving women in the church at Ephesus. The heresy may have been so serious that he had to say about the Ephesian women, "I am not allowing women to teach or have authority over a man." Other passages show that such exclusion was not normative in Paul's ministry.

First Timothy 3:1–13. This entire passage has been held by some to confirm that all leaders and authorities in the Early Church were supposed to be males. The passage deals primarily with male leadership, most likely because of majority practice and expectations. But there is also significant support for female leadership.

Typical of modern English versions, the New International Version translates verse 11, "In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect". The NIV translators arbitrarily decided that the verse refers to the wives of deacons (even though there is no reference in the preceding qualifications of elders to their wives).

However, the word translated “wives” is the plural of the Greek word *gynē* which can be translated as either “woman” or “wife” depending on the context. Recognizing this, the NIV translators did include the word “deaconesses” as an alternate reading in their footnotes. But the NASB and the NRSV render the plural form of *gynē* as “women.” Thus, literally, the verse is addressing the qualifications of women in spiritual leadership who, in this context, might easily be called “deacons.”

Although the first-century cultural milieu produced a primarily male church leadership, this passage along with other biblical evidence of female spiritual leadership (e.g., Acts 21:9; Romans 16:1–15 ; Philippians 4:2,3) demonstrates that female leadership was not prohibited, either for Paul’s day or for today. Passages that imply most leaders were male may not be taken to say that all leaders were male, since the biblical record speaks approvingly of numerous female leaders.

Galatians 3:28. Those who oppose allowing women to hold positions of spiritual leadership place contextual limitations on Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Some interpreters restrict the meaning of this triad to salvation by faith or oneness in Christ. That truth is certainly articulated throughout Scripture. Yet the verse carries a ring of universal application for all our relationships, not just an assurance that anyone can come to Christ. “Neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female”—these are basic relationship principles to which faithful followers of Christ must give highest priority.

The God of the Bible “does not show favoritism” (Romans 2:11; cf. also 2 Samuel 14:14; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Acts 10:34; Ephesians 6:9). He calls whom He will and gives gifts and ministries as He chooses; humans must not put limitations on divine prerogatives. The strained relationship between Adam and Eve, including the statement that “he will rule over you” (Genesis 3:16), comes as a result of the curse, making it clear that this was not a part of God’s original and durable design for humankind. In Christ we are truly set free from sin and its curse, which separate us from God and each other and cause us to elevate or demean according to race, social standing, or gender.

### **Therefore We Conclude**

After examining the various translations and interpretations of biblical passages relating to the role of women in the first-century church, and desiring to apply biblical principles to contemporary church practice, we conclude that we cannot find convincing evidence that the ministry of women is restricted according to some sacred or immutable principle.

We are aware that the ministry and leadership of women are not accepted by some individuals, both within and outside the Christian community. We condemn all prejudice and self-promotion, by men or women. The existence of bigotry against women in our world, and all too often in the church, cannot be denied. But there is no place for such an attitude in the body of Christ. We acknowledge that attitudes of secular society, based on long-standing practice and tradition, have influenced the application of biblical principles to local circumstances. We desire wisely to respect yet help redeem cultures that are at variance with Kingdom principles. Like Paul, we affirm that the Great Commission takes priority over every other consideration. We must reach men and women for Christ, no matter what their cultural or ethnic customs may be. The message of redemption has been carried to remote parts of the world through the ministry of dedicated, Spirit-filled men and women. A believer's gifts and anointing should still today make a way for his or her ministry. The Pentecostal ministry is not a profession to which men or women merely aspire; it must always be a divine calling, confirmed by the Spirit with a special gifting.

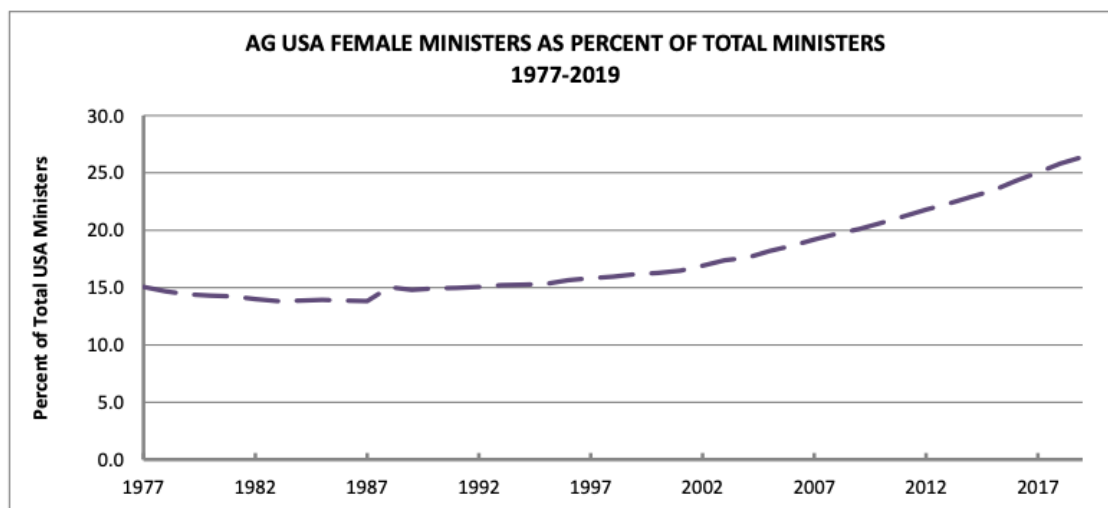
The Assemblies of God has been blessed and must continue to be blessed by the ministry of God's gifted and commissioned daughters. The Bible repeatedly affirms that God pours out His Spirit upon both men and women and thereby gifts both sexes for ministry in His Church. Therefore, we must continue to affirm the gifts of women in ministry and spiritual leadership. Surely, the enormous challenge of the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19) requires the full deployment of all God's Spirit-gifted ministers, both men and women.

Bible Translations and Versions Abbreviations NIV New International Version<sup>[1]</sup> NASB *The New American Standard Bible* ESV English Standard Version

RSV The Revised Standard Version TNIV Today's New International Version NLT *New Living Translation*<sup>[1]</sup> NRSV New Revised Standard Version

## APPENDIX B

### AG USA FEMALE MINISTERS, 1977-2019



<u>Year<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Numeric Change</u>	Female Ministers % of "Total" Ministers <sup>2</sup>	Ordained, Licensed & Special Licensed Ministers	<u>Total Ministers<sup>3</sup></u>
1977	3,220		15.0	21,397	
1978	3,237	17	14.7	22,062	
1979	3,253	16	14.4	22,584	
1980	3,323	70	14.3	23,246	
1981	3,399	76	14.2	23,898	
1982	3,430	31	14.0	24,498	
1983	3,507	77	13.8	25,378	
1984	3,601	94	13.9	25,986	
1985	3,683	82	13.9	26,439	
1986	3,718	35	13.9	26,837	
1987	3,770	52	13.8	27,264	
1988	4,592	822	15.0		30,552
1989	4,511	-81	14.8		30,471
1990	4,559	48	14.9		30,524
1991	4,604	45	15.0		30,746
1992	4,654	50	15.1		30,893
1993	4,722	68	15.2		31,057
1994	4,773	51	15.2		31,300

## APPENDIX C

### AG USA FEMALE MINISTERS, 1977-2019

<u>Year<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Numeric Change</u>	<u>Female Ministers % of "Total" Ministers<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Ordained, Licensed &amp; Special Licensed Ministers</u>	<u>Total Ministers<sup>3</sup></u>
1995	4,861	88	15.3		31,752
1996	5,057	196	15.6		32,314
1997	5,120	63	15.8		32,367
1998	5,156	36	15.9		32,337
1999	5,225	69	16.2		32,304
2000	5,258	33	16.3		32,310
2001	5,335	77	16.5		32,374
2002	5,502	167	16.9		32,556
2003	5,688	186	17.4		32,732
2004	5,817	129	17.6		33,036
2005	6,100	283	18.2		33,553
2006	6,265	165	18.6		33,622
2007	6,502	237	19.2		33,871
2008	6,730	228	19.7		34,178
2009	6,932	202	20.1		34,504
2010	7,231	299	20.6		35,023
2011	7,521	290	21.2		35,483
2012	7,815	294	21.8		35,867
2013	8,132	317	22.3		36,434
2014	8,451	319	22.9		36,884
2015	8,697	246	23.5		37,068
2016	9,142	445	24.3		37,619
2017	9,510	368	25.0		38,002
2018	9,857	347	25.8		38,199
2019	10,081	224	26.4		38,197

<sup>1</sup>Reporting periods varied in the past until December 31, 1981, when we went to a calendar year (January 1-December 31) period. Prior to that time, the closest calendar year is estimated.

<sup>2</sup>Percentages are based on the *subtotal* of ordained, licensed, and specialized licensed ministers until 1988.

<sup>3</sup>Gender data for Christian Workers (later renamed "Certified Ministers") were added in 1988.

## APPENDIX D

**A/G MINISTERS REPORT, 2003**  
**Credentials, Marital, and Ministry Status**  
**By Gender**

Office of the Statistician

Revised 04/20/04

<u>Credentials Status</u>	Female	Male	Total	
			#	% <sup>2</sup>
Certified <sup>1</sup>	1,332	3,573	4,905	15.0
Licensed	2,123	6,013	8,136	24.9
Ordained	1,617	17,125	18,742	57.3
Specialized Licensed	616	333	949	2.9
Total	5,688	27,044	32,732	
Net change from 2002	186	-10	176	
Percent of total ministers	17.4	82.6		

<u>Marital Status<sup>3</sup></u>	Female	Male	Total	
			#	% <sup>2</sup>
Divorced	202	136	338	1.0
Married	3,604	25,412	29,016	88.6
Single	1,018	966	1,984	6.1
Widowed	864	530	1,394	4.3
Total	5,688	27,044	32,732	

<u>Ministry Status<sup>4</sup></u>	Female	Male	Total	
			#	% <sup>2</sup>
Chaplains	35	440	475	1.5
Church Staff Members	1,420	5,167	6,587	20.1
Disabled	22	156	178	.5
District Officials	0	272	272	.8
Evangelists	193	1,042	1,235	3.8
World Missionaries <sup>5</sup>	337	844	1,181	3.6
U.S. Missionaries <sup>5</sup>	161	454	615	1.9
Pastors (senior) <sup>6</sup>	415	10,986	11,401	34.8
Sectional Presbyters	7	624	631	1.9
Seniors (65 and older)	1,854	5,822	7,676	23.5
Senior active	469	2,018	2,487	7.6
Senior semi-retired	105	433	538	1.6
Senior retired	1,280	3,371	4,651	14.2
Teachers (A/G colleges)	50	260	310	.9

<sup>1</sup>

Previously known as Christian Workers.

<sup>2</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding.<sup>3</sup>In 2003, there were 2,318 couples in which both were credentialed A/G ministers.<sup>4</sup>Individuals may be listed in more than one ministry category.<sup>5</sup>Note that these are credentialed missionaries only, not total missionaries, which includes uncredentialed spouses.<sup>6</sup>This number is inflated slightly due to misreporting. Also includes A/G ministers who pastor non-A/G churches. There are an additional 831 non-Council pastors who are senior pastors of A/G churches.



## APPENDIX E

### **AG USA MINISTERS REPORT, 2018** **Credentials, Marital, and Ministry Status** **By Gender**

<u>Credentials Status</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>	
			<u>#</u>	<u>%<sup>1</sup></u>
Certified	2,237	3,842	6,079	15.9
Licensed	4,142	7,046	11,188	29.3
Ordained	3,478	17,454	20,932	54.8
Total	9,857	28,342	38,199	
Net change from 2017	347	-150	197	
Percent of total ministers	25.0	75.0		

<u>Marital Status<sup>2</sup></u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>	
			<u>#</u>	<u>%<sup>1</sup></u>
Divorced	416	285	701	1.8
Married	7,138	26,423	33,561	87.9
Single	1,385	907	2,292	6.0
Widowed	918	727	1,645	4.3
Total	9,857	28,342	38,199	

<u>Ministry Status<sup>3</sup></u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>	
			<u>#</u>	<u>%<sup>1</sup></u>
Chaplains	154	688	842	2.2
Church Staff Members	2,928	4,893	7,821	20.5
Disabled	31	132	163	0.4
District Executive Presbyter	16	209	225	0.6
District Officials	3	205	208	0.5
Evangelists	166	635	801	2.1
World Missionaries <sup>4</sup>	730	1,009	1,739	4.6
U.S. Missionaries <sup>4</sup>	167	462	629	1.6
Pastors (lead) <sup>5</sup>	589	10,287	10,876	28.5
Sectional Presbyters	43	699	742	1.9
Senior retired <sup>6</sup>	1,670	4,801	6,471	16.9
Teachers (AG colleges)	29	149	178	0.5

<sup>1</sup>Percentages may not total 100.0 due to rounding.

<sup>2</sup>There were 4,318 couples in which both were credentialed AG ministers.

<sup>3</sup>Individuals may be listed in more than one ministry category.

<sup>4</sup>Note that these are *credentialed* missionaries only, not *total* missionaries, which includes uncredentialed spouses.

<sup>5</sup>There are an additional 1,393 non-Council pastors who are lead pastors of an estimated 1,417 AG churches.

<sup>6</sup>The previous categories of Active and Semi-retired were discontinued in 2017.